ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS
Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia
19

Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia is a peer reviewed series that publishes monographs, anthologies, editions and translations in the field of Byzantine Studies. The initiative for the series was taken by Lennart Rydén (1931–2002) and the first volume was published in 1986. Rydén's keen interest in hagiography soon came to characterize the series, but it was his intention also to include other branches of Byzantine research. In accordance with this aspiration, an expansion of the scope of *Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia* has been undertaken in recent years. The series thus aims at including all aspects of Byzantine Studies, ranging from textual criticism and codicology to literary studies, art history, and material culture.

RECENT TITLES

Wanted: Byzantium. The Desire for a Lost Empire. Edited by Ingela Nilsson and Paul Stephenson (2014)

Byzantium and the Viking World. Edited by Fedir Androshchuk, Jonathan Shepard and Monica White (2016)

Eustathios of Thessalonike: Commentary on Homer's Odyssey. Volume 1: On Rhapsodies A–B. Eric Cullhed (2016)

Not Composed in a Chance Manner: The Epitaphios for Manuel I Komnenos by Eustathios of Thessalonike. Emmanuel C. Bourbouhakis (2017)

STORYTELLING IN BYZANTIUM

Narratological approaches to Byzantine texts and images

Edited by

CHARIS MESSIS

MARGARET MULLETT

& INGELA NILSSON

UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

ISSN: 0283–1244
ISBN: 978-91-513-0362-8

Cover: Achilles and the Myrmidons, Marc. gr. 454 (Venetus A) fol. 4r

Distribution:
Uppsala University Library,
Box 510, 751 20 Uppsala, Sweden, acta@ub.uu.se

Contents

Notes on contributors

Laura Borghetti is a PhD student at the Johannes Gutenberg University in Mainz and is working within the DFG-funded research training group *Early Concepts of Humans and Nature: Universal, Specific, Interchanged* since October 2016. She is currently working on a doctoral dissertation focused on the analysis of literary depictions of winds in Byzantine texts from the ninth to the twelfth century. Laura completed her MA in Classics at Roma Tre University in November 2015, with a thesis in Byzantine Philology on female saints in iconoclasm, focusing on Kassia's *Menaia*.

Lorenzo M. Ciolfi is a PhD candidate at the EHESS, Paris. He completed his undergraduate studies in philology and Greek palaeography at *Sapienza* University of Rome, gaining expertise which he applies to the translation of classical as well as early modern Greek and Latin texts into Italian. He is now concentrating on the figure and role of John III Vatatzes in the Byzantine and post-Byzantine eras, with particular attention to the question of the emergence of his cult within the framework of Byzantine imperial sainthood. In parallel, he is working on Greek paroemiographic collections in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and their relationship with the developments of western proverb anthologies (with a special focus on Apostolis' *Violarium* and Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Adagia*).

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen was a post-doctoral researcher at Uppsala University until January 2018. He holds an MA in Theology and a PhD from the University of Aarhus, Denmark. His dissertation (2013) was on the dramatic dimension in the *kontakia* of Romanos the Melodist and is currently being revised for publication with Brill. He has taught Church History and is particularly interested in Byzantine hymnography and music, but has also studied and published on Reformation and modern North European hymnography. Eriksen's postdoctoral project was on the use of narrative metalepsis in Byzantine hymns, and the project was funded by the Carlsberg Foundation.

Stanislas Kuttner-Homs is a member of the research laboratory "Monde byzantin" at Collège de France (UMR 8167 Orient & Méditerranée), after having defended his doctoral dissertation, *L'héritage de la littérature antique autoréférentielle dans l'œuvre de Nicétas Chôniatès*, at the University of Caen (Normandy, France) in 2016. His research concerns metapoetics and literary theory in the twelfth century and focuses in

particular on the works of Niketas Choniates. He is now preparing the French translation and commentary to *De signis* together with A. Le Coz (Paris Sorbonne).

TOMASZ LABUK is a PhD student at the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland) and a researcher in a project which focuses on the intellectual history of twelfth-century Byzantium (www.byzantium.pl). He is currently preparing a doctoral thesis on symbolic uses of food consumption and the human body in Byzantine literature of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

CHARIS MESSIS holds a PhD in Byzantine Studies from Écoles des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (Paris) and now teaches at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. His research interests concern Byzantine history and literature, especially the history of gender, along with other social and anthropological aspects of the Byzantine world. He is author and co-editor of several books and articles on such topics.

MARGARET MULLETT is Professor of Byzantine Studies emerita of Queen's University Belfast and Director of Byzantine Studies emerita of Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, DC. She was until 2009 the Director of the AHRC Centre for Byzantine Cultural History with Newcastle and Sussex, and has taught twice (2007–08 and 2016–17) in Vienna, as well as (2006) in Paris. She works on the borderlines of history and literature and has published on letters, literacy, networks, friendship, gender, patronage, monasticism, court cultures, rhetoric, senses and emotions. Her first monograph was *Theophylact of Ochrid: Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop*, and she is preparing translations and studies of three twelfth-century texts as well as a book on tents. In 2017 she was Visiting Professor of Byzantine Greek at Uppsala.

INGELA NILSSON is Professor of Greek and Byzantine Studies at Uppsala University and was Adjunct Professor in Classics at Oslo University in 2016–17. Her research interests concern all forms of narration and literary adaptation, and the tension that such procedures create between tradition and innovation. Such perspectives are at the centre of the monograph *Raconter Byzance: la littérature au 12ᵉ siècle* (2014). She is currently finishing a monograph on Constantine Manasses and the authorial voice of occasional writing in the twelfth century.

JULIE VAN PELT is a PhD fellow of the FWO – Flanders at Ghent University. She studied Classics and Comparative Literary Studies at Ghent University, where she afterwards held a pre-doctoral research position in the ERC-funded research project *Novel Saints*. For two years, she studied the continuation of ancient fictional narrative tradi-

tions into Greek late antique hagiography. Her current research focuses on the literary representation of disguise, 'performance', and narrative construction in late antique *Lives* of cross-dressers, holy fools and other 'saints in disguise' (4th–10th centuries).

AGLAE PIZZONE is Assistant Professor of Medieval Literature at the Danish Institute of Advanced Study, University of Southern Denmark (Odense). Trained in Classics, she holds a PhD from the University of Milan. Her current research focuses on middle Byzantine literature, with a particular interest in the history of emotions and the history of selfhood. Among her publications are *Sinesio e la sacra ancora di Omero* (Milano, 2006) and *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature. Modes, Functions, Identities* (ed., Berlin, 2014).

ANASTASIA SIROTENKO is a PhD student at the Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, Ludwig-Maximilians Universität München, Germany. Her doctoral thesis is dedicated to the image of Emperor Heraclius in the works of Byzantine and Medieval Western authors. Her research interests include Byzantine and Medieval Latin historiography, Byzantine rhetoric, and the political history of the early Byzantine period.

ELLEN SÖDERBLOM SAARELA is a PhD student of Language and Culture at Linköping University, writing a thesis about the potential literary connections between France and Byzantium during the twelfth century in the romance/novel genre. Her background is in the field of Romance languages (major in French) and Classics. She was a visiting student at École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales during the period of March–June 2016, within the framework of the network *Texte et récit à Byzance*.

JUDITH SORIA holds a PhD in Byzantine Art History and is a postdoctoral researcher at the research laboratory Orient & Méditerranée in Paris. Her research concerns primarily art and liturgy, but she has also been concerned with the historiography of Byzantine art as holder of a fellowship at the Deutsches Forum für Kunstgeschichte – Paris. Her doctoral thesis, *Le récit de la Passion du Christ dans les peintures murales : fonctions du cycle narratif à Byzance et en Serbie du XIIIe au XVe siècle*, is currently being revised for publication.

MYRTO VEIKOU specializes in Byzantine Studies (philology, archaeology, history) and takes a particular interest in the investigation of the concepts of space and spatiality in Byzantium. With an intense concern for theory and methods within the humanities and the social sciences, she explores a diversity of interdisciplinary approaches

stemming from a counter-modern theoretical background. Since 2009 she has been publishing on the theory of medieval settlement and spatial studies, based on Byzantine material culture and literary texts. Her doctoral thesis on Byzantine history and archaeology (2007), published as *Byzantine Epirus, a Topography of Transformation. Settlements of the 7th–12th Centuries in Southern Epirus and Aetoloacarnania, Greece* (Leiden 2012), addressed the history of medieval settlement as a result of interaction between physical/social space and human agency, and set forth new theory on the historicity of space. She is currently a PhD candidate in Byzantine philology at Uppsala University.

MILAN VUKAŠINOVIĆ holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in History from the University of Belgrade. He is presently enrolled in a joint PhD program of Byzantine history at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris and the University of Belgrade. Although he is working on ideology and narrative in the thirteenth century, his interest and projects also cover the first decades of the Macedonian dynasty seen through the lens of social and cultural history.

ANNALINDEN WELLER recently completed a postdoctoral research fellowship at Uppsala University in the *Text and Narrative in Byzantium* project. Her work addresses Byzantine-Armenian cultural contact in Eastern Anatolia. Her first monograph, *The Armenian-Byzantine Frontier: The Cultural Politics of Empire in the Medieval World*, will be published by I. B. Tauris Press in 2018.

1

BYZANTINE STORYTELLING AND MODERN NARRATOLOGY: AN INTRODUCTION

Charis Messis & Ingela Nilsson

Modern narratology, at least as it was conceived, theorized and practised by Vladimir Propp, Mikhail Bakhtin, Roland Barthes, Julia Kristeva, Gérard Genette and others, was an attempt to respond effectively to the aestheticism and subjectivity that had dominated the evaluation of literary texts and thus literary criticism of the nineteenth century. Narrative theorists proposed a sort of quantification, mathematization and objectivization of the text with more or less structuralist analytical schemes. The aim was, at least initially, to fight the romantic notions of the 'masterpiece' and the 'genius' of the author. The analysis was therefore focused on the literary construction rather than on the aesthetic effect of the text. This objectivization of literary criticism turned out to be fruitful in many ways – it stimulated new attitudes to the literary act while, at the same time, demonstrating its limits and dead ends. This means that today, as part of a postmodern development, we face a certain disintegration of the concept of literariness proposed by theoretical narratology, a re-evaluation of the aesthetics of the text and a reappearance of the author. If form remains the primary concerns of narratology, its present emphasis is certainly on function.[1]

We Byzantinists, cautiously staying in the margins of the epistemological developments of the twentieth century – sometimes as rigid in our ritual of scholarship as the Byzantines themselves – are accustomed to adopting certain select aspects of different 'modern' theories just when they are about to die.[2] But we are obliged to make this journey in order to be able to communicate as equals with our colleagues in Medieval

[1] For useful overviews of the development of narratology, see Herman 2005, Fludernik 2005 and McHale 2005. Handbooks and companions to narrative theory are numerous, e.g. Phelan & Rabinowitz 2005, Herman, Jahn & Ryan 2005 and Herman 2007, while Pier & Berthelot 2010 and Herman et al. 2012 offer more advanced introductions to debates that include the post-classical developments. The online LHN (*The Living Handbook of Narratology*) is continuously updated and indispensible to anyone interested in narratology.

[2] For an overview of literary criticism and its place in Byzantine Studies, including narratology, see Agapitos 2008. In the decade that has passed since then, modern theory has certainly been applied by an increasing number of Byzantinists, but we are not familiar with any more recent

and literary studies, even if we arrive a little late. In the case of narratology, Byzantinists have turned primarily to the by now already classical representatives like Genette, Propp and Bakhtin, already thoroughly tested and approved by medievalists – a rather safe choice, one might say.[3] Meanwhile, colleagues in the fields of both classical and medieval narratology have moved on to discuss the issue of diachronicity and the need for a historicizing narratology, that is, for adapting the theoretical approaches and models for the analysis of premodern texts. Ansgar Nünning addressed this need in a survey published in 2000, but it was with Monika Fludernik's 2003 article that the "diachronization of narratology" became a concept cited in wider circles.[4] Fludernik's call for diachronization has been noted by classicists, most notably by Irene de Jong, and the series *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* may be seen as an attempt at such an approach to Greek literature.[5] Classical philology has indeed in the last twenty years or so made narratology an integral part of the study of ancient literature, although the diachronic aspect that includes late antique, medieval and Byzantine literature remains rather neglected.

This neglect has been noted by Eva von Contzen in her manifesto for the need for a medieval narratology, published in 2014. The manifesto offers a useful point of departure for Byzantinists interested in narratology, especially in its combination of 'historical' and 'diachronic' focus. The aim, according to von Contzen, is not "a theory of narrative that is (re)constructed from medieval discussions about how to compose and structure texts, but rather a narrative theory that seeks to explain the forms and functions of medieval practices of narration."[6] With the help of narratology, modern scholars can do justice to the complexities of medieval narration and "improve our understanding of narrative elements both in and across literary periods."[7] So-called postclassical narratology is underlined by von Contzen as a particularly promising avenue for the study of medieval literature, since it encourages the kind of historical and contextualist theorizing that was excluded by its classical predecessors.

Against this brief description of the development in neighbouring fields, let us consider the current relation to narratology in Byzantine Studies. Although recent years

examination of the field. Note, however, also the pioneering articles by Mullett 1990 and 1992 along with the important comments in Mullett 2003.

3 See e.g. Agapitos 1991, Nilsson 2001 and Mullett 2006.

4 Nünning 2000 and Fludernik 2003.

5 See de Jong 2014, 6. The ambition of the *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative* (Brill, with the first volume published in 2004) is to write the history of Greek literature from a narratological point of view. Note also Grethlein & Rengakos 2009 and Cairns & Scodel 2014.

6 von Contzen 2014, 2.

7 von Contzen 2014, 1–2.

have seen a growing interest in Byzantine narration and narratological approaches,[8] there is still a certain scepticism or at least hesitation to be noted, especially among historians and other scholars working primarily with non-fictional material.[9] It is often assumed that narratology is useful only for the study of fictional texts and of no or little relevance to the study of 'factual' writings, and many narratological studies of Byzantine texts have indeed focused on novel and romance.[10] It is true that narratology was originally developed as a set of methods primarily intended for fictional texts, produced under conditions that are different from those of 'factual' texts. In order to reconstruct a poetics of 'factual' texts, one would thus be obliged to consider almost all narrative as fictional, but this would in turn require narratology to make concessions and continuous readjustments.[11] Such readjustments seem to have caused classical narratologists some problems,[12] but as already mentioned, the postclassical development is more inclined to take into account historical contexts and therefore more suitable for texts aspiring to be 'factual', with all that such a programmatic choice implies as regards the relation between author, narrator, text and audience.

Byzantine literature, whether fictional or 'factual', is also characterized by certain features that seem to be lacking in the texts based on which classical narratology originally evolved, such as the modern novel. A Byzantine text is often constructed from several narratives serving as *exempla*, constituting independent narrative unities and being organized into a continuous narrative according to extratextual criteria. Each narrative element must then be analysed in itself before one examines its literary functionality in the text as a whole and the changes from a textual perspective that such

8 For descriptions of such developments, see Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010 and Nilsson forthcoming. See also the contributions in Burke et al. 2006 and Roilos 2014.

9 It is worth noting here the ongoing debate on whether certain Byzantine texts should be seen as fictional or not, as in Lauxtermann 2014, discussing the reading of Bourbouhakis 2007. From a strictly narratological perspective, such a debate is not very relevant; cf. Hägg 2014 and Messis 2014 (both on hagiography). Note also Kaldellis 2014 on the development of fiction in Byzantium and cf. Agapitos 2012, Pizzone 2014 and van den Berg 2017.

10 See e.g. Agapitos 1991, Nilsson 2001, Cupane 2013 and 2014 with references to her earlier works. However, this picture has certainly begun to change and numerous studies on historiography, hagiography and other genres have appeared in the last few years. In addition to works mentioned in the notes above, see also Nilsson 2006, Nilsson & Scott 2007 and Heilo 2014.

11 One branch of the theoretical considerations of historiography, the 'typical' genre of factual narration, emphasizes its fictionalization and, consequently, its need to undergo a narratological analysis, but then a narratology adapted to the conventions of 'factography'. This branch, based on the writings of Hayden White, may be seen as part of the so-called Linguistic Turn. On the concept of factography, see the useful comments in Hägg 2014. On the need for narratological adjustments, cf. also von Contzen 2014, 7, citing Vitz 1989, 222.

12 One may think of, for instance, the apparent unease of Genette in his treatment of this topic in his *Fiction et diction* (first published in 1991); see LHN, s.v. *Fictional vs Factual Narration*.

an incorporation imposes. Moreover, Byzantine literature is extremely codified, filled with classical and/or biblical references which exemplify, explain or even summarize and replace the narrative, a narrative that often reveals its real meaning only after a complete understanding of the references it contains. The decoding that Byzantine literature thus imposes on us through, on the one hand, the fabric of quotation and, on the other, its episodic character, demand much more than a usual narratological analysis. Such an analysis, breaking down the text into its units (author, narrator and focalizer, time and space etc), is useful in order to understand the construction of a narrative, but since it partly erases its peculiarities – or perhaps its 'alterity', as von Contzen puts it in the case of medieval literature[13] – it cannot reach a full interpretation of the text from either literary or historical perspectives.

This does not mean that narratology is not useful, but that we Byzantinists must combine our knowledge of the texts and their historical context with careful theoretical readings and sometimes also some scholarly imagination in order to shape a theory and a method for narrative analysis that is adapted to Byzantine literature and its interpretative needs. An attempt at such a reconciliation of Byzantine philology and classical narratology was made by Ingela Nilsson in a recent study of the narrative poetics of Komnenian literature.[14] With a point of departure in the textual analysis proposed by Genette and his concept of "palimpsestuous transtextuality", Nilsson underlines the particular importance of transtextual relations for a literature like the Byzantine, a product of imitative and emulative practices. A thorough examination of transtextual relations may even replace the philological search for sources, accompanying each edited text in the form of an apparatus fontium that is often relatively or completely useless for a profound understanding of the text. As underlined by Nilsson,

> Quand il s'agit de citations ou d'allusions, il est important de ne pas signaler seulement la source, mais surtout de reconnaître la fonction de l'emprunt. Nous devons rompre avec l'habitude de limiter notre travail philologique à la simple classification des sources [...] les emprunts littéraires ne sont pas uniquement des stratégies pour embellir un texte [...] et les lieux communs ne sont pas employés parce que l'écrivain n'arrive pas à trouver quelque chose d'original [...] l'emploi d'une citation connue vise à placer un ouvrage dans un contexte concret afin que le lecteur le comprenne d'une manière concrète – une compréhension basée sur la connaissance et l'acceptation d'un héritage commun.[15]

As philologists we should not limit ourselves to searching for concrete words and phrases, drawn from previous authors, but rather look for precise scenarios and narrative units, present in earlier texts and indicating the author's familiarity with the original text and not just his or her use of a vocabulary or an anthology of phrases. By such

[13] von Contzen 2014, 13.
[14] Nilsson 2014.
[15] Nilsson 2014, 29, see also p. 73.

a method we may observe how the author often adopts an episode without copying it faithfully and even changes certain words in order to conceal its dependence. A traditional apparatus might well ignore such a loan and the reader thus miss its significance and as a result completely ignore the metanarrative qualities of the text.[16]

Nilsson's ambition to make Genette's theory and method known among and, above all, useful for Byzantinists is based on the awareness that even classical narratology has been relatively neglected in the field of Byzantine Studies. At the same time, as noted above, some colleagues in Medieval Studies have already moved on to defining a specifically 'Medieval Narratology', drawing on the postclassical developments in narratology. Such initiatives are certainly useful for our study of Byzantine narration, whether we feel the need to develop a specifically 'Byzantine Narratology' or not, but there is still a need in our field to digest narrative theory per se and see where that takes us. With the present volume we wished to push the contributors to move in the direction of postclassical narratology and explore its potential for analysing premodern texts, but above all to encourage them to find their own variety of narratological analysis, classical or not. Such an approach has been encouraged within the research network "Texte et récit à Byzance" (2015–2017), which has offered a fruitful platform for exchange of ideas between students and scholars interested in Byzantine narratives and narratological perspectives. The chapters of this volume represent some, but not all of the projects that have been carried out within or in collaboration with the research network, and we think they will be both instructive and inspirational for colleagues across the field of Byzantine Studies.

The spatial dimension of narratives has often attracted less attention than temporal aspects, and there has been a tendency to reduce narrative space to the setting of a story – the place in which the action takes place. Postclassical developments in narratology, as well as the so-called Spatial Turn in social science and humanities, have decidedly changed that, so it is no surprise that the first four chapters are all concerned with different aspects of narrative space. First, Myrto Veikou approaches the Byzantine ekphrasis from a spatial and social perspective, arguing that space – contrary to the traditional view – is not something that can be simply 'described' or 'represented'. Physically, corporeally and mentally experienced, spaces are lived through iterative embodied spatial practices; therefore, accounts of spaces mean accounts of cultures. Drawing on the anthropological term 'thick description', Veikou accordingly investi-

[16] According to Nilsson, an "intertextual" approach is not enough to bring out this complexity, which is why Genette's insistence on literature's 'palimpsestuous' quality is significant for Byzantine literature; see also Nilsson 2010. Not employed by Nilsson 2014, but highly relevant as a complement to her approach, is the concept of metanarrative; for a useful introduction, see Nünning 2005.

gates Byzantine ekphraseis of spaces (ranging from private enclosed spaces to official buildings) as ways of amplifying cultural experiences and making them meaningful. Her investigation shows how ekphraseis in Byzantium were efficient narrative vehicles for expressing religion, ideology and politics as cultural systems, activating the spatio-cultural experiences of the audience.

Ellen Söderblom Saarela then zooms out from Byzantium proper in order to look at potentially Byzantine spaces in the French medieval romance *Partonopeu de Blois* (c. 1200). Söderblom Saarela investigates the narrative 'subjectivity' of the anonymous French narrator and its relation to the employment of Byzantine spaces in the romance plot. She argues that Byzantine spaces in this work play an important role of alterity, which allows the narrator – and by extension, the protagonist – to express his or her own identity. Accordingly, the narrated space of Byzantium entails also the techniques involved in the narration, so that the ekphrastic discourse becomes potentially 'subjective' in the voice of the western narrator. Milan Vukašinović turns our attention to another non-Byzantine genre, namely Serbian hagiography. Vukašinović analyses the epistolary correspondence between characters, so common in his thirteenth-century examples, from the perspective of narrative space and storyworlds. He argues that the narratological function of letters is closely connected with the construction and communication of storyworlds, and in particular their spatial elements, and proposes that the function of such narrative strategies should be sought in the social context in which they were composed. Drawing on postclassical narrative theories of cognitive scripts and schemata, Vukašinović shows how the construction of storyworlds is closely related to the lived social reality of authors and readers. In the fourth chapter, Anna-Linden Weller offers another comparative perspective, this time between Byzantium and Armenia. The postclassical concept of storyworlds is employed also by Weller, but here used in a narratological model that accounts for the usefulness of tropic characters (in the vein of *ēthopoiia*) in Byzantine historiography. This model, argues Weller, can also show an influence between Byzantine and non-Byzantine historiographies which is both subtler and more pervasive than strict intertextuality. The importance of such an approach is that it enables us to observe and consider ways in which narratives and narrative forms can move across cultural and even linguistic boundaries.

The Byzantine concern with liturgical and hagiographical storytelling is at the focus of the following five chapters. Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen offers a narratological analysis of the sixth-century *kontakia* of Romanos the Melodist, defining them as "hymns with dramatic narratives", that is a kind of Christian storytelling. Eriksen accordingly approaches the hymns from both formal and exegetic perspectives, examining the reasons for retelling biblical stories with use of vivid dialogue and creative expansions of the biblical plots. He argues that especially recognition and reversals are central

narrative devices in the hymns, showing how they contribute to making storytelling a didactic tool that uses dramatic narratives in order to unlock the mysteries of the Bible and facilitate a meeting with the divine. Laura Borghetti takes a related but different approach in her study of the ninth-century poet Kassia. Borghetti takes a point of departure in the observation that Kassia's hymns display affinities with hagiographical narrative as regards temporal and causal connections. She draws on Propp's model for considering such connections, adapting it for religious narration in the form of hymns rather than folktales – kinds of narration which, argues Borghetti, have much in common. She thus shows how Kassia, by blending genres and bending narrative techniques, managed to celebrate the glory of holy women, singing in a female voice on behalf of the entire Christian community of women.

Borghetti's exploration of the generic affinities between hymn and hagiography leads us to the theme of the following two chapters, focusing on hagiographical narration – one of the most widespread and at the same time most flexible narrative forms of Byzantium. Julie Van Pelt explores the *topos* of concealed identity in Byzantine *Lives* of saints in disguise. She approaches the texts from a performative perspective, understanding holy fools and cross-dressers as "actors" and "actresses". Combining this performative approach with that of narratology, Van Pelt investigates the larger implications of the theme of secrecy and disguise for the construction of the narrative as a whole, both on the level of the plot and on the level of the discourse. Her analysis thus shows how performance in this kind of hagiography functions as a literary device that structures and drives the narrative. In the next chapter, Lorenzo Ciolfi turns to hagiographical writing of the fourteenth century in the case of the *Life of Saint John Vatatzes*. Arguing that this *Life* should be understood rather as a political pamphlet in hagiographical guise, Ciolfi turns to narratology in an attempt to support his political interpretation with a narratological analysis. Starting by defining four layers of time in the *Life*, he moves on to investigate the author's use of temporal order and his handling of narrative rhythm. Ciolfi thus shows how the author slowed down the rhythm by means of generic shifts in episodes where he wished to take a personal stance in contemporary political and social debates. In the tenth chapter, Judith Soria stays with the question of time and temporality but turns our attention to the narrativity of iconographical representations. Soria investigates the narrative structure of late Byzantine mural paintings representing the Passion of Christ, a basically evangelic narrative of the last events of Christ's life. Approaching the sequence and temporality of this series of images, Soria brings in Raphaël Baroni's post-classical narratological approach, emphasizing the tension of narrative as the immanent force behind a plot. Considering both the intradiegetic and the extradiegetic aspects of the images, Soria shows how modern narratology may be seen to correspond to the Byzantine mystagogic concepts of *his-*

toria and *theōria*, and thus offer a useful methodological tool for going beyond mere temporal sequences of images.

The remaining five chapters examine historiographical, political and autobiographical narratives, all pervasive forms of storytelling in Byzantium. But just as hagiography was a genre open to generic influence and mixture, historiography should be seen as a more open and flexible form than is usually acknowledged. A good example of such a text, invariably seen as biography, history or panegyric, is the tenth-century *Life of Basil*. Charis Messis investigates the connection between narrative strategies and political aims in this text, stating that the Byzantines themselves saw no problem in seeing this text simply as 'history'. Messis goes on to discuss the forms and techniques of literary subversion, arguing that it is a narrative strategy that calls for a complicity of author and reader – thus a question of reading as much as of writing. His analysis accordingly offers a more ambiguous and less clearly panegyrical reading of the text than is usually assumed. In the next chapter we turn to Byzantine chronography of the early ninth century, as Anastasia Sirotenko studies narrative and editorial techniques in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes. Sirotenko has chosen to focus on the reign of Heraclius, since that episode opens for a comparative analysis with older sources, bringing out the specific narrative mechanisms of Theophanes' chronicle. Sirotenko shows how Theophanes was not just a compiler of earlier material, as has often been argued in the case of chronography, but that he carefully constructed his narrative with the aim of creating a new and ambivalent image of Heraclius, dependent on Theophanes' own iconodule views and religious attitude to the past.

The following two chapters both deal with the twelfth- to thirteenth-century historian Niketas Choniates and his *Chronikē Diēgēsis*. The analysis of Stanislas Kuttner-Homs starts out by defining "autocitation" as a potential narrative strategy, allowing Choniates to communicate specific ideas, or even stories, to an audience familiar with several of his writings (the *Diēgēsis*, the *Letters* and the *Orations*). Such a substory may be traced 'beneath' the account of the imperial reign from Andronikos I Komnenos (1183–1185) to Alexios IV Angelos (1203–1204) – a story that resembles tragedy and romance rather than history proper. Kuttner-Homs calls it a *Thebaid* after the ancient cycle of stories surrounding the city of Thebes, bringing out also the focus on crimes committed within a family. By showing how Choniates employs known stories and *topoi* from ancient literature in several of his works, the significance of such choices is brought out as an essential narrative strategy. Tomasz Labuk takes a different approach in his analysis of the same author, focusing on the character of Andronikos Komnenos as represented in the *Diēgēsis*. Drawing on the concept of trickster characters and narratives, Labuk studies particularly "tricksterish" patterns of behaviour and structure in the portrayal offered by Choniates. Reading the representation of Andronikos as a

trickster narrative, Labuk shows how Choniates' narrative is consciously presented as contradictory and ambiguous, aiming at reproducing a shape-shifter rather than a 'real' person. This, argues Labuk, explains why Andronikos constantly assumes antithetical shapes and forms, defies the ontological boundaries of reality, and in the end faces not one but many deaths.

Historical, political and cultural accounts are rarely entirely free from autobiographical strains, though authors may be more or less keen to display them. In the last chapter of the volume, we stay in the twelfth century but turn to an author who tended to emphasize rather than hide his own self: John Tzetzes. Aglae Pizzone challenges the idea of Tzetzes' self-commentary in the *Chiliades* as being incidental, and argues that it is integral to the work's design. In order to demonstrate this, Pizzone examines how Tzetzes defines his own autobiographical subject in the first part of the work, focusing on the performative and illocutory dimension of autobiography. Tzetzes' autobiographical narratives are thus analysed not in relation to other sources, but against the structure of the *Chiliades*, focusing on their function within the overall narrative of the work. With such a method, Pizzone is able to show how the autobiographical act in the *Chiliades* had important social functions related to issues such as the instability of authorial and social identity. It should be noted that such social and cultural functions of narrative strategies and choices have been underlined in several of the chapters, indicating that narrative is much more than just a literary concern. Accordingly, narratology is more than just a literary method – it is a set of approaches that can and should include all kinds of intellectual and cultural concerns, helping us to better understand both our objects of study and our own scholarly endeavour. A final consideration of such issues in relation to the content of this volume is offered by Margaret Mullett in her Afterword.

We should like to express our gratitude to the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences (Riksbankens Jubileumsfond) for the generous funding of the research network "Texte et récit à Byzance" ("Text and Narrative in Byzantium", 2015–2017), a collaboration between Byzantinists at Uppsala University and in Paris (Monde byzantin, UMR 8167 Orient et Méditerranée, and Centre d'Études Byzantines, Néo-Helléniques et Sud-Est Européennes, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales). We are grateful to the Department of Linguistics and Philology at Uppsala University for hosting and co-funding the main part of the network. Colleagues in Paris have also been most helpful in offering a platform for activities at their end, as have colleagues at Oslo University (Department of Philosophy, Classics, History of Art and Ideas) – warm thanks for that. Above all, we would like to thank the participants of seminars, reading groups, workshops and conferences organized by the network – you have all

contributed to this volume, whether you have written a contribution or not. The interest in the network has been both overwhelming and inspiring, and we are indebted to all participants for sharing their ideas and thoughts with us. A special thanks to Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, Markéta Kulhánkova, Anna Lampadaridi, Myrto Veikou and AnnaLinden Weller for taking an active part in the organization of meetings and conferences; your help and enthusiasm have been invaluable. Last but not least, many thanks to Eric Cullhed for encouraging and critical comments throughout the project and for invaluable help in turning this into a beautiful volume.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agapitos, P. A. 1991. *Narrative Structure in the Byzantine Vernacular Romances. A Textual and Literary Study of Kallimachos, Belthandros and Libistros*. Munich.

——— 2008. "Literary criticism", in E. Jeffreys, K. Haldon and R. Cormack (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Studies*. Oxford, 77–85.

——— 2012. "In Rhomaian, Frankish and Persian lands: fiction and fictionality in Byzantium", in P. A. Agapitos and L. B. Mortensen (eds) *Medieval Narrative between History and Fiction: From the Centre to the Periphery of Europe, c. 1100–1400*. Copenhagen, 235–367.

Berg, B. van den. 2017. "The wise Homer and his erudite commentator: Eustathios' imagery in the proem of the *Parekbolai on the Iliad*" *BMGS* 41/1, 30–44.

Bourbouhakis, E. C. 2007. "'Political' *personae*: the poem from prison of Michael Glykas: Byzantine literature between fact and fiction" *BMGS* 31/1, 53–75.

Bourbouhakis, E. C. and I. Nilsson, 2010. "Byzantine narrative: the form of storytelling in Byzantium", in L. James (ed.) *A Companion to Byzantium*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, Chichester and Malden, MA, 263–74.

Burke, J. et al. (eds) 2006. *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*. Byz Aus 16, Melbourne.

Cairns, D. and R. Scodel (ed.) 2014. *Defining Greek Narrative*. Edinburgh.

Contzen, E. von. 2014. "Why we need a medieval narratology: a manifesto", *Diegesis: Interdisciplinary E-Journal for Narrative Research* 3.2, 1–21.

Cupane, C. 2013. "Una passeggiata nei boschi narrativi. Lo statuto della finzione nel 'Medioevo romanzo e Orientale" *JÖB* 63, 61–90.

——— 2014. "Other worlds, other voices: form and function of the marvelous in Late Byzantine Fiction", in Roilos (ed.) 2014, 183–202.

Fludernik, M. 2003. "The diachronization of narratology" *Narrative* 11/3, 331–48.

——— 2005. "Histories of narrative theory (II): from structuralism to the present", in Phelan and Rabinowitz (eds) 2005, 36–59.

Grethlein, J. and A. Rengakos (eds) 2009. *Narratology and Interpretation: The Content of Narrative Form in Ancient Literature*. Berlin.

Hägg, T. 2014. "Fiction and factography in the *Life of St Anthony*", in Roilos (ed.) 2014, 31–40.

Heilo, O. 2014. "When did Constantinople actually fall?", in I. Nilsson and P. Stephenson (eds), *Wanted: Byzantium – The Desire for a Lost Empire*. SBU 15, Uppsala, 77–92.

Herman, D. 2005. "Histories of narrative theory (I): a genealogy of early developments", in Phelan and Rabinowitz (eds) 2005, 19–35.

——— ed. 2007. *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge.

Herman, D., M. Jahn and M.-L. Ryan (eds) 2005. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London.

Herman, D. et al. (eds) 2012. *Narrative Theory: Core Concepts and Critical Debates*. Columbus, OH.

Jong, I. de. 2014. *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide*. Oxford.

Kaldellis, A. 2014. "The emergence of literary fiction in Byzantium and the paradox of plausibility", in Roilos (ed.) 2014, 115–30.

Lauxtermann, M. 2014. "Tomi, Mljet, Malta: critical notes on a twelfth-century Southern Italian poem of exile" *JÖB* 64, 155–76.

LHN = The Living Handbook of Narratology. Eds P. Hühn et al. Hamburg 2013 [2009]: http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de/

McHale, B. 2005. "Ghosts and monsters: On the (im)possibility of narrating the history of narrative theory", in Phelan and Rabinowitz (eds) 2005, 60–71.

Messis, Ch. 2014. "Fiction and/or novelisation in Byzantine hagiography", in S. Efthymiadis (ed.), *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography.* vol. 2*: Genres and Contexts*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VA, 313–41.

Mullett, M. 1990. "Dancing with deconstructionists in the gardens of the Muses: new literary history vs ?" *BMGS* 14, 258–75.

——— 1992. "The madness of genre" *DOP* 46, 233–43.

——— 2003. "New literary history and the history of Byzantine literature: a worthwhile endeavour?", in P. Odorico and P. A. Agapitos (eds), *Pour une* « nouvelle » histoire de la littérature byzantine. Paris, 37–60.

——— 2006. "Novelisation in Byzantium: narrative after the revival of fiction", in Burke et al. (eds) 2006, 1–28.

Nilsson, I. 2001. *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure. Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites'* Hysmine and Hysminias. SBU 7, Uppsala.

——— 2006. "'To narrate the events of the past': on Byzantine historians, and historians on Byzantium", in Burke et al. (eds) 2006, 47–58.

——— 2010. "The same story but another: a reappraisal of literary imitation in Byzantium", in E. Schiffer and A. Rhoby (eds), *Imitatio – aemulatio – variatio*". Vienna, 195–208.

——— 2014. *Raconter Byzance: la littérature au XIIe siècle*. Séminaires byzantins 3, Paris.

——— forthcoming. "Narrative: theory and practice", in S. Papaioannou (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Byzantine Literature*. Oxford.

Nilsson, I. and R. Scott. 2007. "Towards a new history of Byzantine literature: the case of historiography" *Classica et Mediaevalia* 58: 319–32.

Nünning, A. 2000. "Towards a cultural and historical narratology. A survey of diachronic approaches, concepts, and research projects", in B. Reitz and S. Rieuwerts (eds) *Anglistentag 1999 Mainz*. Trier, 345–73.

——— 2005. "On Metanarrative: towards a definition, a typology and an outline of the functions of metanarrative commentary", in J. Pier (ed.) *The Dynamics of Narrative Form: Studies in Anglo-American Narratology.* Berlin, 11–57.

Phelan, J. and P. J. Rabinowitz (ed.) 2005. *A Companion to Narrative Theory*. Chichester and Malden, MA.

Pier, J. and F. Berthelot. ed. 2010. *Narratologies contemporaines. Approches nouvelles pour la théorie et l'analyse du récit*. Paris.

Pizzone, A. 2014. "Lady Phantasia's 'epic' scrolls and fictional creativity in Eustathios' 'Commentaries' on Homer" *MEG* 14, 177–97.

Roilos, P. (ed.) 2014. *Medieval Greek Storytelling: Fictionality and Narrative in Byzantium*. Wiesbaden.

Vitz, E. B. 1989. *Medieval Narrative and Modern Narratology. Subjects and Objects of Desire*. New York.

SPACES AND STORYWORLDS

2

'TELLING SPACES' IN BYZANTIUM: EKPHRASEIS, PLACE-MAKING AND 'THICK DESCRIPTION'

Myrto Veikou

> Mobile, embodied practices are central to how we experience the world, from practices of writing and sensing, to walking and driving. Our mobilities create spaces and stories – spatial stories.
> (Cresswell & Merriman 2012, 5)

What is the point of describing a space to someone who already is – or has been – in it? Well, it seems that the Byzantine *ekphrasis* was an outstanding means of communication because of its social role and its masterly achievements: its combination of three distinct functions (narrative, aesthetic and exegetic) in a single text worked to appeal to audiences and elusively transmit ideology or political discourse.[1] I here follow this narratological approach and focus on ekphraseis of spaces in order to argue that it is possible to look beyond their representational interpretations.[2]

My foundational starting point is based on research in cultural geography, according to which space and its organization express social relationships interwoven with power and knowledge, but also react back upon them.[3] In other words "space and time are always and everywhere social, and society is always and everywhere spatial and temporal".[4] This same concept runs in literary theory through Mikhail Bakhtin's 'time space' or chronotope, defined as "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and

1 Nilsson forthcoming a.

2 For such interpretations see e.g. Macrides & Magdalino 1988, 58–59; James & Webb 1991; Saradi 2011, 2012; Kostenec & Dark 2011. Ruth Webb 1999b has discussed the representational aspect of 'description' in relevant approaches. Irene de Jong 2012, 7 also used 'description' as the appropriate category referring to ancient ekphrasis, albeit observing "a complicating but at the same time interesting blurring of the boundaries between description and narration". Cf. Nilsson forthcoming b.

3 Foucault 1993; Soja 1989, 76–93.

4 Thrift 1996, 92.

spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature".[5] Edward Soja has further explained this concept from a spatial perspective:

> Human life is consequently and consequentially spatial, temporal, and social, simultaneously and interactively real and imagined. Our geographies, like our histories, take on material form as social relations become spatial but are also creatively represented in images, ideas, and imaginings.[6]

This foundation is the departure point of my main argument that space is not something that can simply be 'looked at' by people, at a certain moment, and merely 'represented' through 'description';[7] instead, space is constantly being physically, bodily and mentally experienced, and it is being lived through iterative embodied spatial practices.[8] In brief, accounts of spaces mean historical accounts of cultures.[9]

Based on the above conceptions of ekphrasis and space I propose an alternative understanding of ekphraseis of spaces, along the following lines. Ekphrasis was not a mere description but had a strong social exegetic role based on narrative and aesthetic mediation.[10] If we accept that at least some of the ekphraseis of spaces were meant to be narrated by their authors to a living audience in situ, then these texts aimed to offer interpretations of those spaces. So, written accounts of spaces – which already sprang from authors' own spatial experiences – seem to have worked in two directions: as 'amplifiers' and as meaning-creators of the audience's spatial experiences.[11] I here suggest that such accounts aimed to make 'places' i.e. spaces which have specific meaning and socio-cultural connotations;[12] the way to make these places was by interpreting social and cultural reality and by drawing from the audience's and author's common cultural 'baggage'. The vehicle for these explications seems to have been a kind of dynamic and 'mobile' narration, whose conception is, in my opinion, very close to our contemporary anthropological term of 'thick description'. I here argue that thick description and the dynamic itinerant motion would have made efficient and persua-

[5] Bakhtin 1981, 84. In Bakhtin's literary artistic chronotope "spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot, and history" (Bakhtin 1981, 84). For a discussion of this literary 'space time' from the spatial perspective see Holloway & Kneale 2000.

[6] Soja 2010, 18. For an earlier analysis of this concept of space see Soja 1996.

[7] Thrift 1996; Thrift 2007. A more explicit explication of this principle can be found below in the subsection "Storytelling on-the-move and the question of representation".

[8] De Certeau 1984; Lefebvre 1991; Thrift 1997; Soja 1996; Thrift 2007; Soja 2009.

[9] See Soja 2009 for an explicit autobiographical account of relevant developments in geography.

[10] Nilsson forthcoming a.

[11] Henry Maguire's perceptions of Byzantine ekphraseis (1974, 2000, 2011) lie very close to this concept and were extremely helpful at the background of this study.

[12] For space and place-making see the classic work by Carter, Donald & Squires 1993.

sive narrative devices for the expression of religion, ideology and politics as cultural systems, since they allowed for the author's spatio-cultural experience to connect with the audience's.

Such an understanding helps to rehabilitate those features of ekphraseis which have been noted as controversial or problematic, such as lacunae or discontinuities within descriptions of cities or indeed the influx of other rhetorical categories into the ekphraseis. My arguments are based on examples from ekphraseis which present such 'problems'. These texts offer accounts of spaces ranging greatly in size (a city, a garden, a building, a room, or part of a room such as a floor mosaic), and degree of privacy (from open-access public space to more private ones: the street, a church, the imperial palace). I selected texts which are specifically 'telling' of Constantinopolitan spaces dating from the sixth to the fourteenth century, because those are numerous and have been extensively discussed; besides they offer further potential for contextualization owing to the availability of additional information on the city from other kinds of texts and archaeology. For the sake of clarity, my analysis and discussion will be preceded by a brief explication of the multiple dimensions and roles of space in this specific kind of narrative.

NARRATIVE SPACES IN THE EKPHRASEIS

Byzantine texts (or parts of texts) included in the broad term of ekphrasis are thought of as consisting, potentially, of a type of particularly detailed narration that did not just record the appearance of things but told readers how events had unfolded, in a way that, ideally, made the listeners feel as if they were there.[13] The technical rhetorical term used to describe this task is *enargeia*, closely translated as "vivid description";[14] apart from its signification of an aesthetic quality, a few other underlying meanings of the term have been discussed by Stratis Papaioannou: truth, allusive speech, image-making or representation, and a "certain power to lead the things denoted before the senses" associated with performance.[15] All these meanings refer to rendering something visible, vivid and comprehensible (i.e. to giving it qualities which are more theatrical than narrative), hence its felicitous recent reading as "immersion".[16]

In these texts, space, first of all, intersects with narration in four principal ways. Firstly, it is an object of representation. Secondly, it also functions as the environment in which the narrative is physically deployed, or, to put it differently, as the medium in

[13] Webb 2011, 20.
[14] James & Webb 1991, 6–7.
[15] Papaioannou 2011. See also Webb 2009, 87–106.
[16] Allan, de Jong & de Jonge 2017.

which the narrative is realised.[17] Thirdly, it constitutes the very origin of the narration (through its being experienced by the author). Fourthly, space and narration together produced one further – exceptional – spatial experience, since the communication of the narrative often involved an in situ (i.e. located) performance (I shall return to this important aspect, below). Of these four aspects, the first one has been already extensively discussed by Byzantinists.[18] The second, third and fourth issues connect narratology with spatial studies, since the spatial experiences, which encompass both the narration and the audition/reading of these texts, go beyond representation.[19] Simply put, these ekphraseis do not only involve 'narrating *in* space' and 'narrating *through* space', but also clear and direct 'narrating space'.

Thus, from a narratological point of view, in this kind of text, space is anything but a "backdrop to plot";[20] instead, it constitutes per se the main focus of a narrative whose plot consists of the narrator's perception and embodied experience of space as well as his reaction to it.[21] In such a plot, space serves a variety of further narrative roles: apart from being the main focus of attention, it is a bearer of symbolic meaning, an object of emotional investment, a principle of organization, a supporting medium and a means of strategic planning.[22] I shall now consider these roles of space in Byzantine ekphraseis of spaces, with a specific focus upon the significance of the narrator's envisaged strategic planning of his explication of spatial experiences. I intend to demonstrate an underlying narrative strategy for persuasion, in which the accounts of spaces and embodied spatial practices constantly serve to fill the missing link between the author's agency and the audience's own lived experience; common space constructs common experience and builds community of perception.

NARRATING SPACE: STRATEGIES FOR PLACE-MAKING

'Deep-mapping' narratives

As already mentioned, ekphraseis had an exegetic function based on narrative and aesthetic mediation;[23] thus, the ekphraseis of spaces aimed to offer the audience explications and interpretations of those spaces. These explications and interpretations derived from the authors' own spatial perceptions, conceptions and experiences and,

17 Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 1.
18 Vavrinek, Odorico & Drbal (eds) 2011; Odorico & Messis (eds) 2012.
19 Thrift 2007. See the section "Non-representational narrative devices for place-making" below.
20 Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 1.
21 Bal 1985, 93; Maguire 2011.
22 Ryan, Foote & Azaryahu 2016, 1.
23 Nilsson forthcoming a.

as they were performed in situ, they were 'investing' an audience's bodily spatial experience and transforming it into embodied knowledge. In Aelius Theon's words, from his handbook on the *progymnasmata,* "ekphrasis is a periegetic discourse which leads one around making the subject vividly manifest" (ἔκφρασίς ἐστι λόγος περιηγηματικὸς ἐναργῶς ὑπ' ὄψιν ἄγων τὸ δηλοῦμενον).[24] Hence, the idea of leading is implicit in the term *periēgēsis*. The purpose of authors' performative narration was to enhance and 'amplify' bodily spatial experience, on one hand, and to invest it with meaning producing knowledge. In that way, the ekphraseis transformed the 'space', which was being experienced, into a 'place' with specific meaningful significance; the composition of other ancient periegetical texts, such as by Pausanias, or Egeria, should also be inscribed within this literary tradition. Our own ultimate theoretical concerns, when reading these texts, could well involve exploring and attaining a deeper understanding of place (as distinguishable from that of space) as well as of sense of place, of place-making, and of experiencing place in Byzantium; however these exceed the limits of this study.

A good example of this place-making process by spatial storytelling is the ekphraseis which offer spatial narratives similar to 'deep mappings' (except with textual images instead of pictorial ones).[25] The term of 'deep mapping' is used to signify the creation of maps which come to represent the embodiment and outward visual expression of the entire physical and cultural geography of an area.[26] A 'deep map', then, is more than a topographical product in that it interweaves physical geography and scientific analysis with biography, folklore, narrative, text, memories, emotions, stories, oral histories, and so much more to contribute to a richer, deeper mapping of space and place.[27] Spatial stories weave pathways through deep maps to track, organize and record people's experiences and relationships with places, because the act of mapping features to convey information is embedded in our everyday consciousness and usage.[28] As put by Trevor Harris, "maps are more than pieces of paper: they are stories, conversations, lives and songs lived out in a place and are inseparable from the political and cultural contexts in which they are used."[29]

[24] Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata* 7.1 Patillon & Bolognese, author's translation. In James & Webb's interpretation, "ekphrasis is thought of as performing a similar function to visual art: it is a vivid visual passage describing the subject so clearly that anyone hearing the words would seem to see it" (1994, 4–6). For another analysis see Nilsson 2014, 135–145, 153–158, and Nilsson forthcoming a.

[25] About textual images (descriptions) and the way they work together with the narrative text in the ekphraseis, see Nilsson 2005.

[26] Harris 2015, 29.

[27] Harris 2015, 39–40.

[28] Harris 2015, 39–40.

[29] Bodenhamer, Corrigan & Harris 2015, 28–29.

A deep-map-like spatial narrative takes the form of ekphrasis in Paul the Silentiary's sixth-century account of Hagia Sophia, which 'maps' spatial features inseparable from past and present human agency; the text indicates the itinerary of the narrated visit and accounts for the meanings of materials and structures while revealing aspects of agency behind everything's construction.[30]

> And outside the divine church you may see everywhere, along its flanks and boundaries, many open courts. These have been fashioned with cunning skill about the holy building that it may appear bathed all round by the bright light of day.[31]

Paul does not describe a space, but a spatial experience.[32] In Nicoletta Isar's words,

> the description of the illumination of the church was rendered in connection with the space itself, space and light being similarly perceived by the poet. Lighting was not understood as an additional element in the space but as an organic part of the architectural structure, necessarily partaking both of the same movement – the χορός.[33]

Furthermore, Paul's high-register, scholarly and classicizing language, reminiscent of antiquity, – certainly expected on the specific occasion the text was performed (the festivities for the inauguration of the renovated Great Church in 563 CE)[34] – must have worked well to enhance the spatial experience of a historical monument very much connected to the audience's local and ethnic identities. Paul uses a lavish vocabulary in order to put together an imposing narration of the church's "wonderful" inner space,[35] i.e. a space which convincingly stood up to the Constantinopolitans' glorious past as bequeathed by highly esteemed literary texts of the Greek tradition.[36] Through such a place-making of Hagia Sophia, by deep-mapping, Paul's text "transformed the objects of sense perception (*aisthēsis*) into potential objects of intellection (*noēsis*) […] and transcended the material reality (*materiality*) of the building of Hagia Sophia into a monument of wisdom (*sophia*)";[37] it narrates the transformation of a man-made structure into an *empsychos naos*.[38]

[30] Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*; Macrides & Magdalino 1988.

[31] Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* l. 612–616 Friedländer, tr. Mango 1986.

[32] Isar 2004; Pentcheva 2010, 48–9; Schibille 2014, 13–41.

[33] Isar 2004, 240.

[34] Whitby 1985.

[35] "Return, my song, to behold a wonder scarcely to be believed when seen or heard": Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia* l. 446–447 Friedländer, tr. Mango.

[36] A good example is Paul's description of the dome of Hagia Sophia (l. 481–505), where epic and lyric elements seem to blend towards accentuating the feelings of magnificence, inspired by that dome.

[37] Schibille 2014, 15–16.

[38] See Pentcheva 2010, 45–56.

Spatial narratives of time (historical space)

Research has shown how relationships of political and social power influence the representation of historical events in public spaces: narratives of history are commonly organized spatially in historical sites and memorial spaces, especially in urban settings and in places invested with a sense of collective memory.[39] A number of narrative strategies have been identified in these accounts (declamatory, sequential and non-sequential linear ones etc), an issue I shall return to below.[40] The recurrence of similar narrative strategies in Byzantine ekphraseis reinstates the discussion of methodological generic issues such as the historicity of rhetorical and literary texts or the narrativity of historical texts.[41]

For example, such a narrative strategy is found in a description of Constantinople interposed between two historical narratives in Constantine Manasses' *Synopsis Chronike*:

> He builds upon this ancient town a city highly blessed,
> the greatest city of them all, the city of new Rome,
> a Rome untouched by wrinkles still, a city never ageing,
> a Rome that is forever young, forever in renewal,
> a Rome from which are flowing forth abundant streams of Graces,
> she rests enfolded by the land, the sea is reaching for her,
> she lies there tenderly embraced within the arms of Europe,
> while from behind she's being kissed by the gentle lips of Asia.[42]

This description of the City serves to imply the history of the empire while also highlighting a crucial theme: the splendour of both the imperial city and Byzantium in general, which Manasses aims to demonstrate in his writings.[43]

Constantine of Rhodes' account of buildings and monuments in Constantinople, including the church of the Holy Apostles, is another good example of such narration.[44] The text presents a complex structure: Constantine makes a selective account of monuments and buildings, in a non-sequential spatial and chronological itinerary; between distinct narrative parts of his account Constantine interposes transitional parts and dedications to the emperor Constantine VII; he omits buildings that he should normally be looking at during his *periēgēsis* (suggested as lacunae by past editors).[45] But, if Constantine wrote himself that his "account is partial" (μερικὴ διήγησις)

[39] Azaryahu & Foote 2008, 179.
[40] Azaryahu & Foote 2008.
[41] See e.g. the discussion by Webb 2011.
[42] Constantine Manasses, *Synopsis Chronike* l. 2319–2326 Lampsidis, tr. Nilsson 2005.
[43] Nilsson 2005, 137–38.
[44] Constantine of Rhodes, *Poetic ekphrasis.*
[45] James 2012, 159–218; cf. discussion of ninth-century ekphraseis by Ousterhout 1998. For a history of how researchers have dealt with the poem's structure, see James 2012, 131–57.

of the monuments (l. 18–19) in his heading,[46] then giving a complete description of the centre of the city was obviously never his actual objective. Instead, what he would be doing might be to narrate spaces as spatial stories, in order to communicate ideology and culture. That would, in fact, explain why this text consists of pieces of as many as three distinct poems, which were combined and assorted by editors – mostly Constantine himself – to be used on different occasions.[47]

More elements in the poem support such an authorial intention. For example, Liz James has observed that the 'magic' numbers four and seven are central motifs throughout the entire poem.[48] Constantine first announces seven monuments as "wonders" (l. 19–254) and then seven pictorial representations of the life of Christ in the Church of the Holy Apostles (l. 751–981); he does that although, in both cases, he accounts for many more. The passage about the "four rulers who rule lawfully like four-lighted, brightly-shining stars" (l. 22–26) serves to introduce the significant number four into the city section of the poem.[49] So, writing in the tenth century, Constantine does not aim to describe Constantinople. Instead, he aims to create a place with symbolic meaning (the capital of the Byzantine power) out of – what would have been left of – the late-antique city-space. In the making of such a place, he accounts for those ancient historical sites which will provide the audience with a tangible link to the past they evoke.[50]

A final example of historical space as a narrative device, used to make a place out of an author's own spatial experience, is Nicholas Mesarites' ekphrasis in his work *The Palace Revolt of John Komnenos* (c. 1203). This historical treatise, where Mesarites recounts a coup attempted by John Komnenos at the imperial palace on 31 July 1200, contains a passage that briefly describes an Islamic-style building, the Mouchroutas, which was part of the imperial palace complex in Constantinople.[51] As extensively discussed by Alicia Walker, Mesarites' explicit description of the imperial chamber of Mouchroutas,

[46] It has been suggested that this heading is a later edition and that the word μερικὴ reads more like an editorial comment. See James 2012, 135–36.

[47] Marc Lauxtermann, in 2012, was the first to discern that there must have been at least three different copies of Constantine's text on the monuments of the city in existence: the original; one reviewed by Constantine himself; the one available today in a single manuscript in Athos. These, in his view, come down to represent: the original text composed for the young emperor Constantine VII; a revised version used by a patriographic source which was later used by George Kedrenos; and the updated version of 931–44, which was never officially published. See detailed discussion in James 2012, 136.

[48] James 2012, 137.

[49] James 2012, 137.

[50] Azaryahu & Foote 2008, 179.

[51] Mesarites, *The Palace Revolt of John Komnenos* 27–28, English translation, commentary and discussion by A. Walker 2010.

where the emperor John Komnenos was sitting on the floor – instead of sitting on his throne in the Chrysotriklinos – works in his narrative to communicate the author's feelings for the emperor, saving him the need to actually phrase them.[52] The author gives a two-paragraph, detailed account of a space only to hide himself behind it: he aims to convince his audience that Mouchroutas is a place one should not be interested in, thus John Komnenos does not deserve the throne.[53] In Ingela Nilsson's words, "ekphraseis describe, narrate and explain, so that within a longer narrative they can 'spatialize', express themes, and similarly move the story along."[54]

NON-REPRESENTATIONAL NARRATIVE DEVICES FOR PLACE-MAKING: MOBILITY AND 'THICK' DESCRIPTION

"Spatializing" has already been designated as a narrative device in Byzantine ekphraseis.[55] If we look at it more closely, what are more specific narrative tools for place-making in the ekphraseis of spaces? I have identified two such devices: first of all, mobility and, secondly, a technique known from ethnographic research in the 1970s under the name of 'thick description'.[56]

Storytelling on-the-move and the question of representation

Periēgēsis is the term used to describe mobility as a narrative device for the composition of ekphraseis: ἔκφρασίς ἐστι λόγος περιηγηματικός.[57] The word *periēgēsis* is literally translated in English as 'tour', meaning a travel which involves progressive walking around a space (i.e. a circular trajectory) and forming an opinion about that space. The verbal 'tour' that we find in ekphrasis is founded on the social practice of *periēgēsis* i.e. the act of touring (leading oneself or someone else around a physical space). Therefore, the term *periēgēsis* indicates that ekphraseis combine in situ visit and historical account, i.e. inspection and theory.

In respect to the Byzantine ekphraseis, the term has been discussed by Ruth Webb as a narrative device in accounts of buildings.[58] According to her, ancient ekphraseis as descriptions – albeit distinct from modern descriptions[59] – belonged to a rhetorical tradition producing constructions which aimed to create verbal representations of

52 Walker 2010, 92–93.
53 Walker 2010, 92–93.
54 Nilsson 2005, 137.
55 Nilsson 2014, 158.
56 Geertz 1973.
57 See note 24 above. For an analysis see Nilsson 2014, 135–45, 153–58, and Nilsson forthcoming a.
58 Webb 1999a; Webb 2009, 54.
59 Webb 1999b.

their subject matter (in this case, of the monuments they described);[60] *periēgēsis* was employed as a narrative strategy to persuade by deploying meaning in the sites which were being described.[61] Accordingly, Webb considers the form of *periēgēsis* as a narrative framework which provided an organizing principle for describing the interior of a building, allowing space to be represented in terms of an ordered progression unfolding in time.[62] In her own words: "The rhetorical motivation is clear: the attribution of movement and animation to a static entity was one means of making the subject vivid for the listener."[63]

Building on Webb's work, I should like to question her conception of space-representation by arguing that the composition of ekphraseis which narrated spaces was based upon – and aimed to appeal to – non-representational accounts of spatial experiences of the author and the audience.[64] The foundation of my argument is that the described spaces might have been static but their experience by the people was not. If one looks at them as lived spaces (instead of mere physical spaces deprived of their social content and cultural meaning), then it becomes clear that *periēgēsis* was a Byzantine spatial social practice. Its use as a narrative device in the ekphraseis, then, sprang from the author's own personal spatial experiences and his personal place-making, and it aimed to communicate culture, i.e. active and affective interventions in a world of relations and movements.

From a theoretical point of view, there is ample research in post-structuralist social and cultural theory to support this interpretation. The complex ways in which space is involved in human life and thought has been extensively discussed. Nigel Thrift, in his pioneering work about the "geography of what happens", investigated "what is present in experience".[65] Building on longtime developments in the humanities and social studies, he proposed a "non-representational" social theory which was built upon by other geographers.[66] He looked at a variety of spaces, in which politics and the political unfold, and "questioned what is meant by perception, representation and practice,

[60] Webb 1999a, 62–63.
[61] Webb 1999a, 66–68.
[62] Webb 1999a, 72.
[63] Webb 1999a, 69. In her later work on ancient ekphrasis, Webb admits that although the term "description" is the nearest equivalent to ancient ekphrasis, its connotations are really very different (2009, 9).
[64] At the final stage of publication of this article I discovered a forthcoming study by Ruth Webb, in which she also proceeds to a re-interpretation of ekphraseis with a focus different from before: on social and cultural aspects of their historical context, such as spatiality, human agency, embodiment and performativity (Webb 2017). I wish to thank the author for communicating her study and strongly suggest it as a comparative reading to this one.
[65] Thrift 2007, 2.
[66] Crang & Thrift 2000; Thrift 1996; Thrift 2007. See also McCormack 2003; Dewsbury 2003.

with the aim of *valuing the fugitive practices that exist on the margins of the known*".[67] Instead of seeing space as simple framework or even as metaphorics in human life, he saw it as embracing a whole set of different qualities: from a practical set of configurations, which produce new senses of space, to "poetics of the unthought" i.e. "of a latent, well-structured pre-reflective world which, just because it lacks explicit articulation, is not therefore without grip".[68] So, instead of studying and representing social relationships, non-representational theory focuses upon practices – how human and nonhuman formations are enacted or performed – not simply on what is produced.[69] In Derek McCormack's words,

> first, it valorises those processes that operate before [...] conscious, reflective thought [...] [and] second, it insists on the necessity of not prioritizing representations as the primary epistemological vehicles through which knowledge is extracted from the world. That does not mean that representations are dispensed with. Rather they are reanimated as active and affective interventions in a world of relations and movements.[70]

This approach puts exceptional focus on mobile performative practices, such as dancing, playing, and especially walking.[71] Thrift has discussed ways in which movement creates new sensings of space and new kinds of spatial awareness.[72] McCormack has sought to apprehend some of the powers of non-representational practice and performance through an encounter with the rhythmic movement of the body.[73] A series of later studies introduced the research area of "geographies of mobilities" and "walking studies", which focus on the fact that mobility is embodied and practised, and it determines our way of experiencing the world, which is in turn expressed through stories: "our mobilities create spaces and stories – spatial stories".[74]

How exactly does that work? Michel de Certeau in his *Spatial Stories: The Practice of Everyday Life* had earlier suggested that narration and space cross and connect sites through itineraries: what might be called a spatial trajectory where the stories about places are structured in a linear and interlaced series. Space connects places, but place is also imbued with temporal qualities that spatial stories traverse and organize and link into the story form.[75] David Turnbull attempted to reconciliate the complex interactions of agents, objects, knowledge and place in human life by analyzing how knowl-

67 Crang & Thrift 2000; Thrift 2007, i.
68 Thrift 2007, 16.
69 Thrift 1997.
70 McCormack 2005, 122.
71 Thrift 2007, 75–106.
72 Thrift 2007, 89–106.
73 McCormack 2005.
74 See Cresswell & Merriman 2012.
75 De Certeau 1984; Harris 2015, 42–43.

edge is constructed as spatialized narratives of human actions and how artefacts are a material form of those spatial narratives.[76]

A number of narrative strategies employing mobility have been identified and described: according to the type of motion (e.g. linear/non-linear, sequential/non-sequential etc.) or the type of space (e.g. thematic tours, narratives of significant monuments, hybrid narratives).[77] A sequential linear strategy is employed, for example, by Theodore Meliteniotes in his ekphrasis of a garden; Theodore's narrative also moves from the ground upwards, leaving the birds and the wind for the end of his account.[78] A sequential but non-linear trajectory is followed by Paul the Silentiary in his ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia, in order to recreate for his audience the process by which Hagia Sophia had come into being.[79] Examples of non-sequential linear strategies are found in Constantine of Rhodes' account of Constantinople, as discussed above, as well as in the twelfth-century account of Hagia Sophia by Michael the Rhetor.[80]

'Thick descriptions' of/for non-representational narrative experiences

One last issue to discuss in relation to such an interpretation of the ekphraseis is our way of looking at the content of narration: is it description of spaces or not? My final argument is that, in order to tell these spatial stories, Byzantine writers seem to have engaged themselves not in intentional representational descriptions but, instead, in non-representational ones. The concept of 'thick description', proposed by Clifford Geertz in 1973 as a device for ethnographic research, is a useful tool to understand our texts.[81] A 'thick' description is defined by four main characteristics: it 'inscribes' behaviour and social discourse, it is interpretative of them, it lacks coherence (because the cultural systems it interpretates always lack coherence), it is located and small-scale ('microscopic').[82] Why, then, is 'thick description' non-representational? Geertz explains:

> Anthropologists have not always been as aware as they might be of this fact: that although culture exists in the trading post, the hill fort, or the sheep run, anthropology exists in the book, the article, the lecture [...] To become aware of it is to realise that the line between mode of representation and substantive content is as undrawable in cultural analysis as it is in painting. [...] The claim to attention of an ethnographic account does not rest on its author's ability to capture primitive facts in faraway places and carry them home like a mask or a carving, but on the degree to which he is able to clarify what goes on in such places, to reduce the puzzle-

[76] Turnbull 2002.
[77] Azaryahu, Foote 2008; Ryan, Foote, Azaryahu 2016, 160–180.
[78] Theodore Meliteniotes, *Eis Sophrosynen* l. 758–827, 2335–2524, 3054–60.
[79] Macrides & Magdalino 58–60.
[80] Constantine of Rhodes, *Poetic ekphrasis*; Michael, *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*.
[81] Geertz 1973, 1–30.
[82] Geertz 1973, 16–21.

> ment – what manner of men are these? – to which unfamiliar acts emerging out of unknown backgrounds naturally give rise. [...] It is not worth it, as Thoreau said, to go round the world to count the cats in Zanzibar.[83]

In my opinion, in the Byzantine accounts of spaces (including the ekphraseis and perhaps also some other texts e.g. the *Parastaseis Syntomoi Chronikai* and the *Patria*), these kinds of "descriptions" are commonly used in order to allow the interpretation of the cultural context of social spaces, instead of simply 'thinly describing' the physical spaces per se.[84] To explain this use with a couple of examples, Constantine of Rhodes' account of Constantinople is full of accounts of spatial social practices, which he tells in order to create a place with specific cultural meaning for his audience, drawing from their common collective memory and social discourse. These practices run throughout the narration of e.g. the constructions of monuments by emperors and artisans or the scenes of Christ's life, as seen, for example, in the following extract:

> This city gives light to the world in marvellous fashion with its wonders
> and with the brightness of its highest buildings
> and the brilliance of its shining churches
> and with the dome-fashioned roofs of its long colonnades
> and columns set firm to the heights,
> both those of the Forum of Taurus and the lofty Xerolophos
> and that bearing the most honoured form of the cross,
> and the one extending far into the heights,
> worked of bronze and higher than the clouds,
> standing nearby the Wisdom of God,
> the bright church and foremost of buildings,
> talked of everywhere throughout the whole world;
> that column had first place in this city.[85]

The qualifiers in the text (brilliance, brightness, height, marvel, shine) constitute symbols of power and political life, while the 'light' points to religious faith. The text is not just 'describing' the beauty of the monuments and the city; it transmits their cultural meaning, as well as ideology and political discourse by appealing to elements of the audience's collective identity.[86] Another good example is John Phokas's late-twelfth-century ekphrasis of the Holy Land; as shown by Charis Messis, that text was not a mere description of those lands but an expression of the new political signi-

[83] Geertz 1973, 15.
[84] See also Maguire 2011; cf. Webb's representational approach 2009, 2011.
[85] Constantine of Rhodes, *Poetic ekphrasis* l. 29–41.
[86] See other examples in Cupane 2011; Magdalino 2012; cf. the opposite trajectory in Choniates' account of Athens, which "presents its conspicuous antique monuments boiled down to one short sentence"; Efthymiadis 2012, 69.

fication of the Holy Land for the configuration of Byzantine monarchy at the time of Manuel Komnenos.[87]

A third example is the twelfth-century *Ekphrasis of the Earth* by the "specialist of ekphrasis", Constantine Manasses.[88] This description of an ancient mosaic, once part of a room in the imperial palace, contains a deep-mapping of the mosaic itself as well as thick descriptions of: the space; the very work of art (materials, colours, shapes, the subjects represented and historical details in their representations); artistic skills in a historical context; the artist and his agency including his intentions, his cultural background and his skill; the impact of the work of art on himself, in the form of corporeal experience and reactions. The text has different spatio-temporal narratives on so many levels (e.g. Manasses' own self and body at the present time; the mosaic in both present time and during its construction in the past; pictorial art in antiquity; earth at all times in a "spatialized timelessness of the Creation"[89] etc.) All these show, I think, that Manasses is conscious that his explication involves an interpretation of another interpretation / representation (mosaic) of an original (earth).

My last two examples do not come from Byzantine ekphraseis but from Russian ones. The striking difference between these narratives and the previous Byzantine ones further supports, in my view, my argument. The Russian texts, which address the Russian audiences' social and cultural contexts and collective identities, present entirely different thick descriptions of Constantinople, as shown by the following two extracts.

> We went on to a city of indescribable beauty. Its walls were built of twelve courses each of a different precious stone, and its gates were of gold and silver. Within the gates we found a golden pavement, golden houses, golden seats. The city was filled with a strange light and a sweet smell, but as we traversed it, we did not encounter a single man or beast or bird. At the edge of the town we came to a wonderful palace, and we entered a hall as broad as a stone's throw. From one end of it to the other stretched a table of porphyry round which many guests were reclining. A spiral staircase situated at one end of the hall led to an internal balcony. Two eunuchs, resplendent as lightning, appeared on this balcony and they said to my companions: "let him also recline at the table."[90]

> Constantine's Baths are near the wall, high up over the sea. Emperor Leo had water brought here and had a marvellously designed large stone cistern built [...]. A large wooden barrel encircled with iron bands was placed in a corner of this baths with seven taps which supplied whatever kind of water anyone wanted. There was no charge for anyone washing (there) and he (Leo) even placed a stone statue of a man in another corner as a watchman to hold a bronze bow in his hand, and bronze arrows, so that if anyone attempted to exact a fee from someone, he would shoot the barrel so that there would be no more water from it. Alongside the barrel he

[87] Messis 2011, 162–166.

[88] Nilsson 2005, 2014, forthcoming a; Constantine Manasses, *Description of the Earth*.

[89] Nilsson 2005, 139.

[90] *Vision of Cosmas* l. 162–91. Ed. Angelidi 1983; free tr. C. Mango 1980, 152. See also Ivanov 2011, 207–8.

> built a lighthouse encircled with Latin glass, and it burned continuously day and night. Some people told me that this bath lasted three hundred years after emperor Leo. People washed it and the water never stopped flowing from this barrel, and the lighthouse continued to burn until the Franks began to charge a fee, and then this statue shot an arrow and hit the barrel. The barrel broke and the lighthouse went out.[91]

The first text is dated to the tenth century and the second one to the fourteenth or fifteenth century; they both resemble pure ethnographic 'thick descriptions' in that they display an interest in accounting for Byzantine citizens' and rulers' behaviour and discourse in Constantinople. Both texts display no anxiety to transmit ideology or political discourse to an audience by drawing on its collective memory and identity. So, no magic numbers, not much on churches, columns and mosaics: these spatial stories have, instead, eloquent accounts of social discourse in which their authors were most interested.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study, I have attempted to demonstrate some 'spatio-narrative' strategies, involved in the composition of Byzantine ekphraseis of spaces, and I discuss them in their historical contexts. Spatiality was used in these texts as a narrative strategy for persuasion, with different tools which aimed to create credibility. The intended reasoning of this strategy could perhaps be described as follows: "I have been here / there – Here are the slightest details of this / that space – I know what I am talking about – You have to believe me – *This* is the meaning of things". I have suggested that this reasoning was expressed by a number of spatio-narrative strategies and devices: place-making by deep-mapping and narratives of historical spaces, mobility and 'thick description'.

It is evident that spatial stories stem from the universal cultural need to describe, recount, and narrate a particular stream of thought that is situated within, or impacted by, a place or series of places. I have, therefore, tried to explain that, in Byzantine ekphraseis, places are "told by spatial stories": the latter tell of origins, explain causes, mark the boundaries of what is knowable, and explore the territories beyond. In these texts, just as in deep maps and thick descriptions, "the narrative voice refers not to layers of information but to the themes, interaction, and experiences that run through geographies which link the physical and cultural worlds with the fictional, symbolic, and the imaginary".[92] To put it simply, "we live within worlds of stories, and we use stories to shape those worlds".[93]

[91] "Dialogue on the Shrines and Other Points of Interest of Constantinople", ed.tr. Majeska 1984, ch. 3, *Anonymous Description of Constantinople* 142 n.50.

[92] Harris 2015, 42.

[93] Potteiger & Purinton 1998, 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata*. Ed. M. Patillon, *Aelius Théon, Progymnasmata*. Paris 1997 (with French translation).

Anonymous, *Dialogue on the Shrines and Other Points of Interest of Constantinople.* Ed. tr. Majeska 1984, 141, 142, nn. 50, 243.

Constantine of Rhodes, *Poetic Ekphrasis of the Church of the Holy Apostles and the Wonders of Constantinople*. Ed. I. Vassis, tr. V. Dimitropoulos, L. James and R. Jordan in James (ed.) 2012, 18–85.

Manasses, Constantine, *Description of the Earth*. Ed. O. Lampsidis, "Der vollständige Text der Ἔκφρασις γῆς des Konstantinos Manasses" *JÖB* 41 (1991) 189–205; reprinted with modern Greek translation in Agapitos (ed.) 2006, 41–73 (tr.) and 175–99 (notes).

——— *Synopsis chronike*. Ed. O. Lampsidis, *Constantini Manasses Breviarium chronicum.* CFHB 36/1–2, Athens 1996. English translation by Nilsson 2005, 137–38.

Meliteniotes, Theodore, *Eis Sophrosynen* (Description of the Garden). Ed. M. Miller, *Poème allégorique de Meliténiote. Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque impériale et autres bibliothèques*, vol. 19/2. Paris, 1858, 1–138. English translation by Dolezal and Mavroudi 2002, 151–58.

Mesarites, Nicholas, *The Palace Revolt of John Komnenos*. Ed. Walker 2010, 94–95 (with English translation).

Michael, *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*. Ed. Mango and Parker 1960, 235–40 (with English translation).

Paul the Silentiary, *Ekphrasis of Hagia Sophia*, Ed. P. Friedländer, *Johannes von Gaza und Paulus Silentiarius*, Leipzig, 1912, 227–65. English translation by Mango 1986, 80–96.

Vision of Cosmas. Ed. Ch. Angelidi, "La version longue de la vision du moine Cosmas", *AnBoll* 101 (1983) 73–99 (with French translation). English free translation by Mango 1980, 152–53.

Secondary sources

Agapitos, P. A. (ed.) 2006. *Εικὼν και λόγος· έξι βυζαντινές περιγραφές έργων τέχνης*. Athens.

Allan, R. J., I. J. F. de Jong and C. de Jonge, 2017. "From Enargeia to Immersion: The Ancient Roots of a Modern Concept" *Style* 51/1, 34–51.

Azaryahu M. and K. E. Foote, 2008. "Historical space as narrative medium: on the configuration of spatial narratives of time at historical sites" *GeoJournal* 73, 179–94.

Bakhtin, M. M. 1981. *The Dialogical Imagination*, tr. C. Emerson and M. Holmquist. Austin, TX.

Bal, M. 1985. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, tr. C. van Boheemen. Toronto.

Bodenhamer, D. J., J. Corrigan and T. M. Harris (eds) 2015. *Deep Maps and Spatial Narratives.* Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN.

Bourbouhakis, E. C. and I. Nilsson, 2010. "Byzantine narrative: the form of storytelling in Byzantium", in James (ed.) 2010, 263–74.

Brubaker, L. (ed.) 1998. *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?* Aldershot, Hants.

Carter, E., J. Donald, and J. Squires, 1993. *Space and Place. Theories of Identity and Location*. London.

de Certeau, M. 1984. *Spatial Stories: The Practice of Everyday Life*, tr. S. Rendall. Berkeley, CA.

Crang M. and N. Thrift, 2000. *Thinking Space*. London and New York.

Cresswell, T. and P. Merriman, 2012. *Geographies of Mobilities: Practices, Spaces, Subjects*. Farnham, Surrey.

Cupane, C. 2011. "Orte der Liebe: Bäder, Brunnen und Pavillons zwischen Fiktion und Realität", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 167–78.

Dewsbury, J. D. 2003. "Witnessing space: 'knowledge without contemplation'", *Environment and Planning A*, vol. 35, 1907–32.

Dolezal, M.-L. and M. Mavroudi, 2002. "Theodore Hyrtakenos' description of the garden

of St. Anna and the ekphrasis of gardens", in Littlewood, Maguire and Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds) 2002, 105–58.

Drbal, V. 2011. "L'Ekphrasis Eikonos de Procope de Gaza en tant que reflet de la société de l'Antiquité tardive", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 106–22.

Efthymiadis, S. 2012. "Michael Choniates' inaugural address at Athens: enkōmion of a city and a two-fold spiritual accent" in Odorico and Messis (eds) 2012, 63–80.

Foucault, M. 1984. "Space, knowledge and power: interview to Paul Rabinow", tr. C. Hubert, in Rabinow (ed.) 1984, 239–56.

Geertz, C. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York.

Harris, T. 2015. "Spatial storytelling and a sense of place", in Bodenhamer, Corrigan and Harris (eds) 2015, 28–53.

Holloway, J. and J. Kneale, 2000. "Mikhail Bakhtin: dialogics of space", in Crang and Thrift 2000, 71–88.

Isar, N. 2004. "'Χορός of light': vision of the sacred in Paulus the Silentiary's poem *Descriptio S. Sophiae*" *ByzForsch* 28, 215–42.

Ivanov, S. 2011. "Ekphraseis of Constantinople in Old Russian Literature", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 205–12.

James, L. (ed.) 2010. *A Companion to Byzantium*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, Chichester and Malden, MA.

James, L. 2012. "Constantine of Rhodes's poem and art history" in James (ed.) 2012, 131–57.

James, L. (ed.) 2012. *Constantine of Rhodes, On Constantinople and the Church of the Holy Apostles*. Farnham, Surrey.

James, L. and R. Webb, 1991. "To understand ultimate things and enter secret places: ekphrasis and art in Byzantium", *Art History* 14/1 (March), 1–17.

de Jong, I. J. F. 2012. "Introduction – narratological theory on space", in de Jong (ed.) 2012, 1–18.

de Jong, I. J. F. (ed.) 2012. *Space in Ancient Greek Literature*. Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative, Leiden and Boston.

Kostenec J. and K. Dark, 2011. "Paul the Silentiary's description of Hagia Sophia in the light of new archaeological evidence", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 88–105.

Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*, tr. D. Nicholson-Smith. Malden, MA and Oxford.

Littlewood, A., H. Maguire and J. Wolschke-Bulmahn (eds) 2002. *Byzantine Garden Culture*. Washington, DC.

Macrides, R. and P. Magdalino, 1988. "The architecture of ekphrasis: construction and context of Paul the Silentiary's poem on Hagia Sophia" *BMGS* 12 (1988), 47–82.

Magdalino, P. 2012. "The beauty of antiquity in Late Byzantine praises of Constantinople", in Odorico and Messis (eds) 2012, 101–15.

Majeska, G. 1984. *Russian Travelers to Constantinople in the 14th and 15th centuries.* DOS 19, Washington, DC.

Maguire, H. 1974. "Truth and convention in Byzantine descriptions of works of art" *DOP* 28, 111–40.

——— 2011. "The realities of ekphrasis", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 7–19.

——— 2000. "Gardens and parks in Constantinople" *DOP* 54, 251–64.

Mango, C. 1980. *Byzantium, the Empire of New Rome*. New York.

——— 1986. *The Art of the Byzantine Empire, 312–1453*. Toronto.

McCormack, D. 2005. "Diagramming Practice and Performance" *Environment and Planning D*, vol. 23, 119–47.

——— 2008. "Geographies for Moving Bodies: Thinking, Dancing, Spaces" *Geography Compass* 11.2/6, 1822–36.

Messis, Ch. 2011. "Littérature, voyage et politique au XIIe siècle. L'Ekphrasis des lieux saints de Jean 'Phocas'", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 146–66.

Nilsson, I. 2005. "Narrating images in Byzantine literature: the ekphraseis of Konstantinos Manasses" *JÖB* 55, 121–46.

——— 2011. "Constantine Manasses, Odysseus, and the Cyclops. On Byzantine appreciation of pagan art in the twelfth century", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 123–36.

——— 2014. *Raconter Byzance: la littérature au XIIe siècle*. Séminaires byzantins 3, Paris.

——— forthcoming a. "Describing, experiencing, narrating: the use of ekphrasis in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries", in C. Barber and F. Spingou (eds), *Medieval Texts on Byz-*

antine Art and Aesthetics, vol. 3. From Alexios I Komnenos to the Rise of Hesychasm (1081–ca. 1330). Cambridge.

——— forthcoming b. "Byzantine narrative: theory and practice", in S. Papaioannou (ed.), *Oxford Handbook of Byzantine Literature*. Oxford.

Odorico, P. and Ch. Messis (eds) 2012. *Villes de toute beauté : L' ekphrasis des cités dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves*. Actes du Colloque International, Prague, 25–26 novembre 2011. Paris.

Ousterhout, R. 1998. "Reconstructing ninth-century Constantinople", in Brubaker (ed.) 1998, 115–30.

Papaioannou, S. 2011. "Byzantine enargeia and theories of representation", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 48–60.

Pentcheva, B. V. 2010. *The Sensual Icon. Space, Ritual, and the Senses in Byzantium*. University Park, PA.

Pile, S. and M. Keith (eds), *Geographies of Resistance*. London.

Potteiger M. and J. Purinton, 1998. *Landscape Narratives: Design Practices for Telling Stories*. New York.

Rabinow P. (ed.) 1984. *The Foucault Reader*. New York.

Ryan, M.-L., K. Foote and M. Azaryahu 2016. *Narrating Space / Spatializing Narrative: Where Narrative Theory and Geography Meet*. Columbus, OH.

Saradi, H. 2011. "The monuments in the late Byzantine ekphraseis of cities. Searching for identities", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 179–92.

Saradi, H. 2012. "Idyllic nature and urban setting: an ideological theme with artistic style or playful self-indulgence", in Odorico and Messis (eds) 2012, 9–36.

Schibille, N. 2014. *Hagia Sophia and the Byzantine Aesthetic Experience*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT.

Soja, E. 1989. *Postmodern Geographies. The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London.

——— 1996. *Thirdspace. Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Oxford and Malden, MA.

——— 2009. "Taking space personally", in Warf and Arias 2009, 11–35.

——— 2010. *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis, MN.

Thrift, N. 1996. *Spatial Formations, Theory, Culture and Society*. London.

——— 1997. "The still point: expressive embodiment and dance", in Pile and Keith (eds) 1997, 124–51.

——— 2007. *Non-Representational Theory: Space, Politics, Affect*. Abingdon, Berkshire and New York.

Turnbull, D. 2002. "Performance and narrative, bodies and movement in the construction of places and objects, spaces and knowledges: The case of the Maltese megaliths" *Theory, Culture and Society* 19/5–6, 125–43.

Vavrinek, V., P. Odorico and V. Drbal (eds) 2011. *Ekphrasis. La représentation de monuments dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves. Réalités et imaginaires = BS* 69/3, Supplementum, Prague.

Walker, A. 2010. "Middle Byzantine aesthetics of power and the incomparability of Islamic art: the architectural ekphraseis of Nikolaos Mesarites" *Muqarnas* 27, 79–101.

Warf, B. and S. Arias, 2009. *The Spatial Turn, Interdisciplinary Perspectives*. New York.

Webb, R. 1999a. "The aesthetics of sacred space: narrative, metaphor, and motion in ekphraseis of church buildings" *DOP* 53, 59–74.

——— 1999b. "Ekphrasis ancient and modern: The invention of a genre" *Word & Image* 15:1, 7–18.

——— 2009. *Ekphrasis, Imagination and Persuasion in Ancient Rhetorical Theory and Practice*. Farnham, Surrey.

——— 2011. "Ekphraseis of buildings in Byzantium: theory and practice", in Vavrinek, Odorico and Drbal (eds) 2011, 20–32.

——— 2017. "Spatiality, embodiment, and agency in ekphraseis of church buildings", in B. Pentcheva (ed.), *Aural Architecture in Byzantium: Music, Acoustics and Ritual*. Abingdon, Berkshire and New York, 163–75.

Whitby, M. 1985. "The occasion of Paul the Silentiary's ekphrasis of S. Sophia" *Classical Quarterly* 35 (i), 215–28.

3

UN CHEVALIER VOIT LES VOILES DE SOIE : LA VOIX NARRATIVE ET L'ESPACE BYZANTIN DANS *PARTONOPEU DE BLOIS*

Ellen Söderblom Saarela

Même si l'auteur de la littérature médiévale est généralement insaisissable pour le lecteur moderne, le texte dégage pourtant toujours une vision subjective sans laquelle la littérature serait bien moins intéressante, voire parfaitement inintéressante[1]. Dans cette contribution, nous analyserons un passage du roman anonyme français *Partonopeu de Blois*, daté de la seconde moitié du XII[e] siècle[2]. Même si nous ne connaissons que peu de choses sur les conditions de composition de ce roman, nous pouvons tout de même, par l'analyse narratologique, en chercher le caractère historique particulier. Grâce à la combinaison de différentes traditions, la littérature peut être innovante et plus personnelle[3].

Dans les passages que nous analyserons, le protagoniste principal, Partonopeu, un jeune chevalier français, est transporté à Byzance. Dans la ville imaginaire de Chief d'Oire, il aura une relation amoureuse avec l'héritière de l'Empire byzantin, Mélior. Les passages qui nous intéressent décrivent l'entrée dans cette ville avant le début de cette relation. Nous chercherons, derrière la présence du narrateur et la description de l'espace, l'émergence d'une subjectivité littéraire dissimulée.

[1] Cf. l'introduction de Zink 1985. Sur les pages 30–31, Zink avance que à l'époque one voit un développement une incertitude globale qui « favorise la démarche critique, la multiplication des expériences esthétiques, la recherche de points de vue nouveaux, et particulièrement la redistribution des formes lyriques et narratives. On verra bientôt que la confession ou l'introspection fictives qu'offre le *dit* habituent le lecteur à voir la littérature narrative tourner à l'exhibition du sujet, ou plutôt l'exhibition du sujet tourner à la littérature narrative. »

[2] Pour plus d'information qui concerne le roman, cf. l'introduction dans l'édition consultée dans cet article, *Partonopeu de Blois* (2005), aussi bien que la monographie d'Eley 2005.

[3] Pour le cas de Byzance, cf. Papaioannou 2013 et 2014.

LE NARRATEUR ET L'ESPACE

Le narrateur de *Partonopeu de Blois*, comme Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner l'a noté, joue un jeu rhétorique vertueux, qui se focalise surtout sur les techniques descriptives et narratives au lieu des évènements en soi[4]. Ce roman emploie un style narratif novateur qui transforme la manière dont le public regarde les œuvres littéraires. Dans le roman, le narrateur compare l'aventure amoureuse de Partonopeu et de Mélior avec son propre amour. Lori Walters propose de voir dans cette technique, qui en soi n'étonne guère dans un contexte troubadouresque, une manière de faire avancer la narration. En d'autres mots, le narrateur amorce l'histoire de ses protagonistes à travers sa propre histoire[5]. Suivant cet argument, on pourrait dire que dans *Partonopeu de Blois*, nous voyons une évolution de la manière de narrer à la première personne dans la littérature romanesque française[6]. Il semble que la focalisation du roman est celle du narrateur aussi bien que celle de la narration chevaleresque. Dans la suite, nous nous concentrerons sur l'usage d'un style ekphrastique dans le passage qui décrit l'entrée du héros dans une Byzance imaginaire, et nous argumenterons sur la possibilité que cette technique narrative soit liée à la tradition grecque et au monde byzantin[7].

La méthode de l'analyse de la subjectivité du narrateur a été forgée par Sarah Kay dans son ouvrage consacré à la lyrique troubadouresque, *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry*[8]. En analysant des éléments comme l'allégorie, les métaphores et l'ironie, Kay cherche le soi littéraire dans un genre poétique où les normes stylistiques ont une importance considérable. Comment va-t-on interpréter le rôle du narrateur ? S'agit-il d'un « je », dit objectif, dérivant d'une tradition lyrique, ou d'un « je » subjectif, voire la représentation d'une voix individuelle ou collective, qui s'exprime par l'usage des traditions littéraires ? En d'autres mots, la subjectivité est, dans ces cas, la notion d'une voix particulière dans les œuvres littéraires.

Le style du narrateur enchaîne à son tour une discussion sur l'espace, car les descriptions ekphrastiques portent sur Byzance. L'Occident et Byzance se rencontrent dans notre texte ; nous y verrons les fonctions narratives qui peuvent se tracer à cause de cette rencontre des cultures différentes. L'analyse de l'espace renverra de nouveau à notre premier sujet, c'est-à-dire le narrateur et la subjectivité, car l'espace porte des significations, étant un outil rhétorique pour le narrateur. Dans une étude récente, Carolina Cupane discute la notion de l'autre et du soi dans la littérature byzantine du XIIe

[4] Bruckner 1993, 37.
[5] Walters 1992, paragraphe 1.
[6] cf. Walters 1992.
[7] Cette idée a été proposée par Uri 1953, 88–90. L'idée a depuis été contestée.
[8] Kay 1990.

siècle[9]. Elle y montre comment le discours de l'altérité crée l'identité de l'autre aussi bien que du soi, ce que la recherche de Charis Messis a montré aussi[10]. Leurs perspectives nous aiderons à voir comment l'espace narratif dans *Partonopeu de Blois* peut nous parler du contexte extratextuel. Dans le roman, l'espace est décrit à travers les yeux du narrateur, et indirectement à travers le regard du protagoniste Partonopeu ; le chevalier français perçoit Byzance.

Bien qu'il y ait beaucoup des passages importants à discuter sur les questions posées, nous avons dû faire une sélection pour l'analyse : nous allons nous occuper du passage contenu dans les vv. 649–880. Le passage commence par la scène où Partonopeu vient de perdre ses compagnons de chasse dans la forêt d'Ardennes et finit avec l'ekphrasis de la capitale imaginaire de Byzance et une intervention du narrateur. Après cette ekphrasis d'autres suivent et contribuent à l'image exotique de Byzance, mais cela ne nous occupera pas ici.

C'est dans l'élaboration créative des traditions antérieures que le roman *Partonopeu de Blois* excelle dans son aspect innovateur. Le roman semble dialoguer avec son contexte littéraire français aussi bien qu'avec la littérature contemporaine byzantine. La subjectivité littéraire s'articule sur la base de la combinaison des plusieurs traditions littéraires. Les traditions offrent des registres d'où les poètes tirent leurs éléments narratifs ; pour interpréter la signification – ou la voix – d'un texte, il faut reconnaître le caractère unique de chaque œuvre qui crée son sens par l'usage des traditions. En d'autres mots, chaque texte est particulier, car si tout élément possédait une signification traditionnelle figée, les innovations ne seraient pas possibles[11]. C'est donc à travers l'emploi des traditions littéraires que l'œuvre crée sa propre voix. Dans ce texte, nous verrons comment *Partonopeu de Blois* semble employer une mise en scène byzantine pour sa narration française.

Dans la littérature byzantine, l'ekphrasis est une technique rhétorique répandue parmi les poètes de la cour, dont le but principal est d'offrir aux auditeurs (ou lecteurs) l'expérience-même d'apercevoir quelque chose, ce qui pourrait être aussi bien un objet d'art, une ville ou autre[12]. L'ekphrasis est intégrée dans la narration et dans l'espace narratif ; le narrateur crée l'espace où il situe son aventure en la décrivant. Dans la suite nous discuterons l'interaction entre le style de l'ekphrasis et subjectivité littéraire.

[9] Cupane 2016.
[10] Cf. par exemple Messis 2011.
[11] Kay 1990, 6.
[12] Cf. Webb 1999, 10. Voir aussi Veikou dans ce volume.

L'ART DE RACONTER LE REGARD : L'ANALYSE D'UN PASSAGE

Avant le passage qui nous concerne, le narrateur fait une description de la noblesse de Partonopeu. Le garçon – il n'a que treize ans – est le neveu du roi Clovis. Cependant, outre son sang royal, sa descendance va jusqu'à Troie. Nous reviendrons sur ce sujet par la suite. Le passage commence dans la forêt d'Ardennes : Partonopeu chasse avec son oncle, le roi, mais se perd et doit y rester la nuit tout seul en craignant la mort. Il voit ensuite un navire, sur lequel il monte. Le navire est vide et le transporte vers Byzance. Déjà dans la forêt se signale un changement du statut de Partonopeu : alors qu'il était décrit comme appartenant aux personnes les plus nobles de la société, il se trouve dans un état de malheur et de misère :

> Ses beaux yeux ruisselants de larmes, il s'assied sous un chêne. Le malheureux n'y trouve guère de confort, le froid est intense et il manque de vêtements. Il est affamé et n'a rien à manger : jamais il ne s'est trouvé dans une telle difficulté. Il a si peur qu'il ne pense plus revoir le jour. Épouvanté, mort de faim et de soif, privé de couche et réduit à dormir à la dure, il pleure de tous ses yeux, incapable de réagir, car il n'est pas habitué à souffrir[13].

Ce jeune garçon né dans la noblesse souffre du froid, de la faim et de la soif pour la première fois. Le narrateur raconte l'aventure en utilisant le discours indirect pour présenter les pensées et les paroles de ses personnages[14]. Dans le passage cité, pourtant, on pourrait se demander si le narrateur exprime les pensées de Partonopeu, ou s'il présente sa propre opinion lorsqu'il dit que Partonopeu « n'a jamais vécu une telle difficulté », ou qu'« il n'est pas habitué à souffrir ». La narration passe de la focalisation externe à la focalisation interne[15] ; la perspective est d>abord celle du narrateur puis celle de Partonopeu. Ainsi, les impressions du protagoniste semblent partagés par le narrateur. Partonopeu n'a jamais vécu une telle difficulté, dit le narrateur, et grâce au changement de la focalisation, les auditeurs partagent les sentiments du jeune chevalier.

[13] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 649–60 : Il s'est desos un caisne assis, / Plore des beaus iols de son vis. / A grant mesaise vit li las, / Car grant froit fait, si a poi dras ; / Grant faim a, si n'a que mangier, / Ainc n'en avoit eü dangier. / Si a de soi si grant peor, / Ja ne cuide veïr le jor. / Il a peor et faim et soi, / Si a dur lit sains nul agroi. / Pleure des iols, ne set que faire, / Car n'ert apris de nul mal traire. Dans cet article, en citant le roman j'utilise et je me réfère toujours à l'édition *Le roman de Partonopeu de Blois* (2005). Les citations de l'original et toutes les traductions sont de cette édition.

[14] Pour en prendre deux exemples, le narrateur dit en peu plus haut que « Le roi lui dit de ne pas s'attarder » (Li rois li dist qu'il ne demort, v. 613), aussi bien que quand il voit le navire, « [c]royant y trouver quelqu'un, Partonopeu rend grâce à Dieu » (Il en prent Deu a mercier, / Car homes i cuida trover, vv. 705–6).

[15] Pour la terminologie, cf. Genette 1972, 206–11.

Sur le navire, Partonopeu est bien misérable en étant tout seul et en ressentant une grande peur. Le narrateur explique cette peur en comparant les dangers et les craintes en mer avec ceux vécus sur terre :

> Partonopeu connaît alors la peur de sa vie, car il est seul, sans personne à qui parler, loin en haute mer. Il aurait encore préféré la forêt, où pourtant il avait tant souffert. Mais c'est bien connu : en mer, la peur est pire que sur terre. Sur terre, il y a toujours un espoir, alors qu'en mer, il n'y a d'autre issue que la mort[16].

Encore une fois la question de perspective se pose : ces pensées, sont-elles les pensées de Partonopeu ou du narrateur ? La manière de changer la focalisation, en la faisant passer de l'externe à l'interne, crée un mélange des points de vues. On pourrait peut-être noter dans ce style ce que Irene J. F. de Jong considère comme une « embedded focalization » ; le procédé selon lequel le narrateur incorpore la focalisation de son protagoniste dans sa propre narration des évènements[17]. Le narrateur présente la peur de son protagoniste en même temps qu'il offre ses propres opinions et commentaires sur les faits qu'il raconte[18]. Les sentiments de Partonopeu décrits par le narrateur sont donc, d'un côté, les sentiments subjectifs du protagoniste, mais, en même temps, sont décrits du point de vue du narrateur. La peur et l'angoisse du chevalier français sont donc narrées comme des sentiments objectifs pour les auditeurs.

Quand le jour vient, le moment où Partonopeu se rend compte que la voile est confectionnée d'une soie fine, la peur et le désespoir sont remplacés par la joie :

> Durant toute la nuit, Partonopeu s'abandonne aux larmes et au désespoir, mais le jour venu, aux premiers rayons du soleil, il découvre avec émerveillement tous les détails de la voile et le gréement du navire, ouvrage plus subtil que celui d'une araignée. Entièrement faite de soie, la voile – jamais souverain n'en posséda de plus fine – n'avais d'égale que les cordages, tissés par les mains les plus habiles. Tout à sa joie, Partonopeu parvient à retrouver son calme[19].

Dans le passage, on voit encore un changement pour Partonopeu : tombé dans la misère, la qualité matérielle du navire le rend heureux. Les produits (byzantins) changent

[16] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 739–48 : Or a Partonopeus peor, / Ainc en sa vie n'ot gregnor, / Car seus est, n'a a cui parler, / Et si est loing en haute mer. / Miols volsist estre en le forst / U tante paine et tant mal trest. / Peors de terre est mioldre assés / Que n'est de mer, bien le savés. / A terre a mainte garison, / Mais en la mer n'a se mort non.

[17] de Jong 2014, 50.

[18] Notons aussi la thématique de la mer effrayante et dangereuse se trouve aussi dans les romans byzantins contemporains.

[19] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 749–62 : Il plore et maine grant dolor / Tote la nuit, desci al jor ; / Mais quant li jors est esclarcis / Et li solaus est espanis, / Qu'il puet veïr tot cler le tref / Et tot l'atoivre de la nef, / Dont s'esmervelle de l'ovraigne, / Car plus soutil ne fait iraigne. / Li très est tos de soie fine ; / Onques n'ot tel rois ne roïne. / De soie fu tos li funains ; / Molt par le firent sages mains. / Tant s'est delités en la nef / Qu'il l'en est auques plus soef.

le désespoir en joie. Son malheur avait aussi des causes matérielles ; Partonopeu perdit ses compagnons de chasse, et lorsqu'il se trouva seul dans la forêt dangereuse, il avait froid, faim et soif. En d'autres mots, il avait perdu les conditions matérielles qui lui offriraient des vêtements chauds, de la nourriture et de la boisson. La perte de ces privilèges matériels le rend malheureux, effrayé et sans espoir. La vue des voiles de soie le rend heureux de nouveau : le luxe (byzantin) fait cesser ses larmes.

Au XIIe siècle, l'Occident avait des contacts directs ou indirects avec le monde byzantin[20] ; il y avait par exemple à Blois ce que Krijna Nelly Ciggaar définit comme « goût byzantin »[21]. La soie était pour Byzance d'une importance capitale et était offerte comme don diplomatique[22]. Il est par conséquent probable d'imaginer que l'auditeur du roman associe la soie à Byzance. Quand le narrateur explique que la vue des voiles fait cesser les larmes de Partonopeu, il emploie la focalisation interne ; les auditeurs ont accès aux sentiments et aux impressions du protagoniste. Cependant, comme nous l'avons vu dans les passages auparavant, le narrateur tend à échanger la perspective entre celle de son protagoniste et celle de lui-même. Le regard de Partonopeu et suivi par une explication du narrateur, ce qui se démontre par exemple dans les phrases « il découvre avec émerveillement tous les détails de la voile et le gréement du navire, ouvrage plus subtil que celui d'une araignée ». Dans cette citation, la découverte faite par le regard de Partonopeu (focalisation interne) est suivie par une explication, par le narrateur, de la nature de l'objet regardé (focalisation externe). Donc, en disant l'effet que les matériaux byzantins créent sur Partonopeu lorsqu'il les regarde, le narrateur l'explique comme s'il en comprenait et en partageait l'expérience ; il inclut le public dans l'expérience décrite.

La vue du luxe échange la peur pour le calme. Le style rhétorique de *Partonopeu de Blois* exploite de ce fait des oppositions. Déjà au début, le narrateur prie que dieu l'entende et non le diable[23], aussi bien qu'il met une emphase sur le fait que dans la littérature, on doit rencontrer le bien et le mal ; il faut connaître le mauvais pour reconnaître le bien[24]. Le style rhétorique portant sur les oppositions a donc un but explicite : enseigner au public la morale. L'entrée à Byzance est aussi décrite d'une manière à établir des couples antithétiques. Partonopeu, bien qu'il soit heureux du luxe aperçu dans le navire, reste un homme pauvre. Plus la nuit rend obscur le monde, plus la ville byzantine devient éblouissante :

[20] Ciggaar 1996, 185.

[21] Ibid., 183. Blois a été suggérée comme l'espace d'origine du roman, cf. par exemple Eley 2011, 196.

[22] Muthesius 1993, 101.

[23] « Diables soit sors et Deus m'oie. », v. 12.

[24] « Mal et bien i doit l'on trover / Por connoistre et por deviser. », vv. 111–12.

> Plus rapide que le cerf fuyant les chiens, le vaisseau cingle jusqu'au soir, et à la tombée du jour, l'enfant aperçoit une très vive clarté ; plus la nuit s'obscurcit, plus la lumière devient nette. L'embarcation se dirige droit sur elle, comme par magie – et voici qu'apparaissent une ville et un imposant château, merveilleusement beau[25].

Le narrateur dit que *l'enfant* (une épithète fréquemment attribuée au protagoniste) voit une clarté qui, la nuit s'obscurcissant, devient plus lumineuse. La perspective est donc ici celle de Partonopeu. Or, la suite semble encore un cas de « embedded focalization ». Le narrateur explique que la clarté est produite par la ville et par le château vers lesquels le navire se dirige, comme conduit par magie. Le texte entrelace les sentiments du héros et les commentaires du narrateur. La perspective est donc partagée entre le protagoniste et le narrateur.

Deux images oppositionnelles se posent ici : la nuit effrayante dans la solitude est changée en lumière qui se montre quand les rayons du soleil se reflètent sur la soie et le château byzantin. La narration dite objective se mélange avec le regard dit subjectif du protagoniste, en sorte que le public partage la vision de la beauté de Byzance en suivant la narration. Ainsi, le public « s'identifie » avec le chevalier français qui voit le château majestueux, qui paraît alors objectivement majestueux.

Partonopeu entre dans la ville, et sa pauvreté est encore une fois soulignée :

> La nef aborde au pied des murs ; Partonopeu n'y voit âme qui vive, il abaisse néanmoins la passerelle et emmène avec lui son cheval, maigre et épuisé, la croupe saillante et les flancs pendants. Tous deux amaigris par l'épreuve, ils sont encore loin d'être rassurés. Partonopeu se met en selle, anxieux et préoccupé. Rien d'étonnant s'il est inquiet : il ignore tout du pays où il se trouve[26].

Encore une fois Partonopeu éprouve de la peur et de l'angoisse et, par conséquent, sa pauvreté, ou plutôt le manque de luxe, est décrit. La situation matérielle devient dans la narration un indice de l'état intérieur et des émotions du protagoniste : le fait d'avoir un cheval maigre et épuisé signifie le fait d'avoir une attitude psychologique préoccupée et anxieuse. La matérialité est donc métaphorique : ce que Partonopeu emmène avec lui de France lorsqu'il arrive à Byzance fonctionne comme un indice de son

[25] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 763–68 : La nés sigle dusque a la nuit / Plus tost que cers levriers ne fuit, / Et quant li jors est declinés, / Li enfes voit molt grans clartés ; / Et quant la nuis est plus oscure, / De tant est la clartés plus pure. / La nés en vait droit cele part / Con s'on le conduissist par art – / C'est une vile et uns casteaus / Qui molt est buens et molt est beaus.

[26] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 773–84 : Sos le cast[e]l la nés arive. / Part[o]nopeus n'i voit rien vive, / Por quant son pont a fors jeté, / Son chaceor en a mené. / Li roncis est magres et las, / Crupe ot agüe et les flans bas ; / Magre sont angui de mesaise, / Encor n'[o]nt gaires qui lor plaise. / Quant Partonopeus est montés, / Peüros est et trespensés. / N'est mervelle s'il est pesis : / Ne seit u est, n'en quel paÏs.

manque de confort, de pouvoir et d'espoir. Partonopeu, dans le passage cité plus haut, voit la grandeur et la splendeur du château byzantin qui, au lieu d'être environné par la nuit obscure et rendu sombre, devient plus clair et lumineux. Faiblesse et puissance sont donc ici opposées. Le chevalier français est confronté à la soie, au château et à la ville étrangère. L'ensemble représente Byzance.

Le narrateur ensuite dit qu'il n'est pas étonnant si Partonopeu est inquiet, car il ne connaît pas ce pays étrange. Le narrateur, qui, comme il est mentionné plus haut, parle du protagoniste comme d'un enfant, paraît le décrire comme quelqu'un sans connaissances du monde ou sans expérience, bref comme quelqu'un de jeune et naïf. Ce choix devient plus clair lorsque Partonopeu est dans la chambre de sa future amante, mais dans ces vers on peut déjà discerner le rôle métaphorique que Byzance joue dans la narration : c'est la représentation de l'érotisme. Après son entrée à Byzance, le garçon « devient homme », il perd sa virginité. Déjà dans les deux derniers vers du passage cité, le narrateur interprète l'angoisse de « l'enfant » comme un manque de savoir ou, comme nous le proposerons plus bas, de *paideia* (qui donc se lie au savoir érotique).
Le luxe continue à impressionner Partonopeu dans la suite du passage. Les murs de la cité illuminent le ciel :

> Son regard va de sa nef, dont la richesse dépasse toutes les merveilles qu'il a pu contempler, aux murs de la cité, qui illuminent le ciel. Prodigieusement droits et élevés, d'une beauté sans faille, ils forment sur toute leur hauteur, jusqu'aux créneaux, un parfait damier de marbre blanc et rouge. Les créneaux très réguliers sont de marbre vert, vermeil et gris. La splendeur de la sculpture dépasse tout ce que vous pourriez voir au monde[27].

Le narrateur raconte ce que voit Partonopeu et la manière dont il observe ce pays nouveau. Ce qu'il décrit est la contemplation d'un bel objet. Le narrateur a, dans les passages discutés plus haut, transformé le statut de son protagoniste : de la plus haute noblesse, Partonopeu est devenu un homme pauvre qui a froid et faim, un homme faible que la peur le fait pleurer. La nuit obscure est mise en contraste avec la vue de la soie et de la ville byzantines, et cette vue rend le héros calme et joyeux. Ensuite, le narrateur arrive à une longue description de ce pays nouveau, à travers les yeux de Partonopeu. Ainsi, le narrateur peut raconter ce que l'on ressent en apercevant Byzance à ceux qui ne l'ont pas vue. Partonopeu semble représenter les yeux occidentaux qui voient Constantinople pour la première fois. Ainsi, le fait que le narrateur l'a décrit auparavant comme faible et pauvre augmente la forte impression que fait le nouveau pays

[27] Partonopeu de Blois, vv. 785–98 : Il voit sa nef molt mervellose – / Ainc rien ne vit tant preciose – / Et vois les murs de la cité / Qui contre ciel donent clarté. / A mervelle sont doit et haut / Et nule beautés ne lor faut. / Blans est li marbres dont il sont / Et vermel aval et amont, / Tot a eschiekier par quareaux / E[s]t tot li mur trosque es creteaux. / Li cretel sont molt bien assis, / De marbre vert, vermel et bis. / La veïssiés tant bele entaille, / N'a nule el monde qui miols vaille.

sur le jeune héros. Cela pourrait aussi être perçu comme une technique rhétorique du roman pour offrir des commentaires politiques aux auditeurs : la France est faible, Byzance est forte. Comme nous l'avons constaté plus haut, grâce à la manière d'échanger la focalisation entre l'interne et l'externe, la perspective subjective de Partonopeu qui est impressionné par Byzance, est donnée au public en même temps que le narrateur explique ce qu'il voit dans une perspective objective, qui permet donc d'expliquer la faiblesse éprouvée par le royaume de France.

La contemplation de la beauté du pays nouveau continue avec une description du port ; puis, après avoir tout vu, Partonopeu se croit être victime de quelque sorcellerie :

> La grève, vaste et large, longe, l'enceinte. Au pied de celle-ci s'étale le port : mille navires pourraient bien y mouiller en toute sécurité, sans crainte d'être emportés par les flots. En dehors des murs, pas de maison ni la moindre cabane à la ronde.
>
> Face à tant de beauté, l'enfant se croit perdu : toutes ces richesses lui paraissent fériques. Comme il ne voit rien d'inquiétant, il se dit que son trouble est injustifié, et cette pensée le rassure à très juste titre. Il se dirige droit vers la porte, protégée par une tour de quatre cents mètres de circonférence et de presque trois cents de hauteur, à l'abri de tout siège. Elle était d'une pierre blanche comme l'ivoire, ornée de fines ciselures[28].

Le passage commence par une description du narrateur, donc par la focalisation externe. Or, ensuite, la focalisation est interne : c'est Partonopeu qui voit ce que le narrateur vient de décrire. Les objets sont donc décrits d'une vue objective, mais les sentiments évoqués sont subjectifs. Le narrateur garde le point de vue du protagoniste, les auditeurs suivent son regard. C'est effectivement la perception qui est ici le facteur essentiel, car c'est en ne voyant rien d'inquiétant que Partonopeu dompte ses peurs. Lorsqu'il regarde les richesses du pays où il se trouve, Partonopeu croit qu'elles soient féeriques. Le roman narre une expérience de voir un pays étrange et les sentiments que cela pourrait évoquer au voyageur. Tous ceux qui firent le grand voyage vers Constantinople au Moyen Âge, quand ils arrivèrent dans la métropole, eux aussi se trouvaient stupéfaits par la vue impressionnante des murs et des grands palais. Ici, le style ekphrastique dévoile la perception d'un paysage exotique.

[28] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 799–822 : Defors le murs est li graviers / Et grans et larges et pleniers. / Li pors est teus [desos] le mur / Que bien mil nés tot a seür / I puent estre et sejorner ; / Ja mar se movront por la mer. / Defors le mur tot environ / Nen a ne bordel ne maison. / Tant voit li enfes grans beautés / Que molt cuide estre mesalés, / Et cuide que soit faerie / Quanqu'il i voit de manandie ; / Por quant si se porpense en soi / Qu'il ne doit avoir nul esfroi / Quant il n'i voit rien se bien non ; / Si a de ço droit et raison. / De ceste raison se conforte, / Si vient errant droit a le porte. / Desor le porte ot une tor / Qui .cc. toises ot [e]ntor / Et .vij. vins toises a de haut ; / Cele ne crient engien n'asaut. / De liois est blanc con yvoire, / Ovré menu d'oevre triforie. Cf. la manière de Theodoros Prodromos pour décrire Constantinople, dans la discussion de Hörandner (2012).

Après avoir vu le nouveau pays dans lequel il se trouve, Partonopeu entre dans la cité :

> Dès que Partonopeu pénètre dans la cité, une abondance de richesses s'offre à ses regards. Grâce au pavement qui la recouvre entièrement, la rue où il s'engage ne présente pas la moindre trace de boue ; jamais il n'y en aura, car plus la pluie l'arrose, plus le pavé resplendit. Tous les palais sont de la même taille ; jamais il n'en avait vu autant de la sorte. De marbre fin, tour à tour gris, carmin, bleu ou aux nuances variées, noir, blanc – l'hiver ne devait causer aucune crainte à leurs occupants – , tous sont bâtis avec grand art et couverts de tuiles peintes et de plomb[29].

L'enfant Partonopeu voit dès son entrée dans la cité une richesse impressionnante. Le trottoir où il marche, couvert de marbre, n'a rien de sale ; encore une fois des images opposées sont utilisées pour augmenter le luxe et la splendeur de ce pays étrange. Plus il pleut, plus claire devient la rue ; en d'autres mots, rien n'empêche que cette cité (byzantine) s'illumine par ses richesses. Les palais décrits sont tous d'un bon marbre et ont différentes couleurs : les couleurs sont variées – beige, rouge, gris et bleu – , ce qui pourrait décrire les vrais palais byzantins, rayés de beige et de rouge, pourvus de toits gris-bleus.

Dans ce passage, l'architecture domine : les toits sont colorés, les marbres fins aussi. Dans le passage suivant, après avoir vu l'étrange paysage, le regard de Partonopeu va vers les objets d'art :

> Leurs faîtes sont ornés de lions, d'aigles, de dragons et d'autres sculptures aussi vivantes que nature, entièrement parées d'une fine dorure, du plus grand raffinement mauresque. Brillant dans la nuit, les palais aux pignons d'orfèvrerie offraient tous, du côté de la rue, un foisonnant spectacle d'ornements recouverts d'or et d'argent pur. L'un illustrait les éléments, le ciel, la terre, la mer et le vent, tel autre le soleil et la lune, leur cycle et le calendrier des jours ; les histoires, les guerres et les batailles du temps passé[30].

Ici, après avoir décrit la ville, le narrateur présente des objets artistiques. La littérature byzantine et la littérature occidentale partagent une même admiration de l'art[31]. Le narrateur raconte, mais il *apprécie* aussi ce qu'il voit. Regarder est chose plaisante, aussi

[29] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 823–40 : Li enfes entre en le cité, / De ricoise i voit grant plenté. / Il est entrés en une rue / Qui de tai est nete et nue. / De tai n'i puet avoir nient, / Car tote est faite a pavement, / Et quant onques plus i plovra, / Li pavemens plus clers sera. / Li palais sont trestot de marbre fin ; / Li un sont bis, l'autre sanguin, / Li un sont pers, li autre ver – / Qui dedens est ne crient hiver – ; / Li un sont blanc, li autre noir. / Molt furent fait par grant savoir, / Et trestuit sont covert enson / De tuiles paintes et de plon.

[30] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 841–58 : Sor les pumeaus sont li lion / Et li aiglet et li dragon, / Et ymages d'autre figure / Qui samblent vives par nature, / Toutes covertes de fin or ; / Par grant savoir le fisent Mor. / Li [pegnon] de[s] palais tuit / Qui luisent contre mienuit / Devers la rue sont torné, / Et sont d'or musike aorné. / La veïssiés entailleüres / D'or et d'argent covertes pures. / La veriés les elemens, / Et ciel et tesse, et mer et vens, / Solel et lune, et ans et jors / Et les croisans et les decors, / Les estoires des tans antis / Et les guerres et les estris.

[31] Cf. Nilsson 2014b et Nilsson à paraître.

bien que l'expérience de raconter. Dans la « Description de la terre » de l'auteur byzantin contemporain Constantin Manassès, le narrateur, après avoir admiré ce qu'il voit, commence à louer l'image qu'il a devant ces yeux, ce qu'Ingela Nilsson a montré[32]. Un autre exemple se trouve dans le roman byzantin contemporain *Hysminé et Hysminias* écrit par Eumathios Makrembolitès, dont les ekphraseis fonctionnent comme des facteurs essentiels pour l'intrigue-même[33] ; Nilsson avance que pour la narration dans ce roman, les ekphraseis n'endommagent pas son évolution, au contraire, elles la servent[34].

Le narrateur de *Partonopeu de Blois* dit qu'il ne veut pas trop louer la rue, car ainsi les auditeurs pourraient croire qu'il ment :

> Mais assez d'éloges sur cette rue ! Vous finirez par croire que je vous raconte des histoires. D'ailleurs, il n'est personne qui ait la langue assez déliée pour dire à quel point elle est belle ; et quand bien même vous auriez parcouru et observé toutes les rues, vous ne sauriez marquer une préférence pour l'une d'elles, car elles étaient d'une égale beauté. Rien de ce que je vous raconterais sur cette ville ne saurait vous convaincre de ses merveilles et de ses mérites, mais vous me croirez quand vous apprendrez ce qui advint par la suite.
>
> Devant un tel spectacle, l'enfant s'imagine être au paradis. Son ravissement touche au malaise, car il s'y même une grande appréhension. Si la beauté de la ville le réjouit, un tel prodige le rend anxieux, et tout ce qu'il voit lui apparaît comme un mirage[35].

L'expérience perceptive du narrateur est partagée par Partonopeu : l'admiration qui ne pourrait pas être crédible rend nécessaire que le narrateur s'arrête de donner ces longues descriptions, et c'est effectivement l'admiration inconditionnelle qui provoque la croyance de Partonopeu d'être au paradis. Son admiration est si forte que Partonopeu est partagé entre joie et peur. Nous trouvons la même fonction des ekphraseis dans *Hysminé et Hysminias*, où elles semblent suivre le modèle de « beholding – describing – interpreting », en suivant l'expression de Nilsson[36] : le narrateur, ravi, nous raconte la vision, puis suit la réaction du personnage. La réaction de ce dernier est l'étonnement. Nous en donnerons une interprétation plus bas ?

[32] Nilsson à paraître.

[33] Nilsson 2014b, 155.

[34] Nisson 2001, 85 et 87.

[35] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 859–80 : Ne vos vuel plus loer le rue / Que nel tenissiés a falue ; / Mais nus ne set tant de favele / Qui pardesist con ele est bele, / Et quant avrés toutes les rues / Poralees et porveües, / La mellor n'en savrés eslire / Ne ne savrés l[i] quels est pire. / Ne cherriés pour nule rien / La mervelle ne le grant bien / Que de ceste cité cos cant ; / Mais vos le cherrés ça avant / Quant vos orés par quel vertu / Comment ala comment fu. / Li enfes a tot esgardé ; / En paradis cuide estre entré. / Auques a joie, auques dolor, / Car od sa joie a grant peor. / Il a joie de la beauté / Et de la mervelle a pensé, / Et quanqu'il onques a veü / A por fantosme tot tenu.

[36] Nilsson 2001, 85.

Nous avons donc vu les passages pertinents pour nos propos. Quelles conclusions pouvons-nous tirer de cette narration qui combine d'un côté la réaction d'un garçon naïf face au monde byzantin et de l'autre côté les choix rhétoriques du narrateur ?

L'ART D'APPRÉCIER LA BEAUTÉ : PARTONOPEU ET PAIDEIA

Dans l'analyse du passage précédent, nous avons vu que le nouveau pays dans lequel Partonopeu est transporté est décrit à travers le style des ekphraseis. Le narrateur offre aux auditeurs l'expérience d'apercevoir un objet (en l'occurrence, l'objet est la cité). En d'autres termes, en suivant le regard de Partonopeu, le narrateur offre surtout une perception de Byzance. Ainsi, le roman raconte un voyage, ce qui n'était pas rare à une époque où beaucoup d'Occidentaux – des pauvres et des riches – voyageaient à Byzance pour des raisons diverses[37]. Plutôt que décrire un espace narratif fantastique, *Partonopeu de Blois* décrit le regard « touristique » du voyageur qui arrive dans une métropole telle que l'était Constantinople pour les Occidentaux[38].

Cependant, *Partonopeu de Blois* n'est pas un cas unique de rencontre entre Byzance et l'Occident. Megan Moore démontre comment dans le roman contemporain *Cligès* de Chrétien de Troyes, le personnage féminin Fénice s'est donnée la possibilité d'influencer la politique grâce à son mariage. Selon l'argument de Moore, dans les romans de l'époque qui relatent des histoires d'amour entre cultures différentes, les personnages féminins participent aux négociations avec l'empereur byzantin. Bien qu'on puisse interpréter le rôle de Fénice dans *Cligès* comme celui d'un « objet » – les hommes puissants dans le roman semblent l'utiliser comme une marchandise pour tisser des relations entre eux – elle crée des stratégies pour garder le contrôle de sa vie[39] Comme *Cligès*, *Partonopeu de Blois* est un exemple de roman où le personnage féminin est un acteur narratif important dans le cadre d'un espace exotique (byzantin). Or, là où l'usage de l'espace byzantin permet à la femme de *Cligès* de transmettre ses valeurs occidentales à l'Est, dans *Partonopeu de Blois* l'usage de l'espace byzantin permet à la femme de transmettre ses valeurs byzantines au chevalier français[40].

Byzance est un espace narratif dominé par les personnages féminins : l'impératrice Mélior, sa sœur Urraque et leur parente Persewis occupent une place centrale dans la narration[41]. Mélior impressionne Partonopeu en démontrant toute sa sagesse et son

[37] Ciggaar 1996, 21.

[38] Ciggaar 1996 et Bercovici-Huard 1982.

[39] Moore 2014, 30–32.

[40] Pourtant, ces deux romans partagent plusieurs éléments intéressants, comme la place importante des personnages féminins, cf. Söderblom Saarela 2016.

[41] Hilton 1984, 24.

pouvoir ; et comme il a été noté par Carole Bercovici-Huard, les qualités qu'elle possède font écho à l'image de la cour comnène qui régnait à Byzance à l'époque[42]. La ressemblance entre Mélior et les figures historiques de Manuel et de Marie Comnène a aussi été suggérée[43]. Non seulement le caractère de Manuel semble être représenté dans le personnage de Mélior, mais le mariage entre Partonopeu et Mélior semble renvoyer aux mariages réels entre la cour de Byzance et celles occidentales. Ainsi, nous constatons que la tendance décrite par Moore se trouve ici réalisée : dans le roman français, on crée une identité transculturelle avec l'Orient à travers le mariage entre nobles. Ce qui rend particulier le roman de Partonopeu est donc que le chevalier se « byzantinise » au lieu de « rendre occidental » l'Empire byzantin. La différence entre *Partonopeu de Blois* et *Cligès* est due surtout au fait que le roman de Partonopeu semble offrir un message « pro-Byzance », au lieu de dire que les Français méritent de conquérir cet espace géographique. Il est vrai que Partonopeu lutte pour la France et son roi, cependant, selon le roman, les Français sont liés aux Byzantins par l'héritage troyen. Avant qu'il soit transporté à Byzance, le narrateur présente Partonopeu comme le neveu du roi Clovis, comme extrêmement beau, et précise que le roi l'aime plus qu'il n'aime son propre fils[44]. Le narrateur évoque le lignage du roi en le faisant remonter à Troie. Dans cette description, le narrateur présente une relation antagoniste entre l'Italie et Troie (et donc par conséquent il adopte la vision de la Gaule, ou de la France)[45]. Plus tard dans le roman, l'impératrice byzantine Mélior explique que Partonopeu mérite son attention, car il est du noble sang troyen : « votre extraordinaire beauté et votre très grande noblesse me poussent à vous choisir, vous, qui êtes du sang d'Hector. »[46].

Lier le lignage de Partonopeu à Troie est important si on considère le rôle de Byzance dans ce roman. Au Moyen Âge, Constantinople est vue comme l'héritière de Troie. Byzance devient le symbole de l'héritage romain. Dans le prologue de *Partonopeu de Blois*, Troie est décrite comme la porte vers l'Asie et sa perle[47], ce qui – on pourrait se l'imaginer – rappelle probablement à l'auditeur Constantinople, qui aussi est située à la frontière de l'Asie[48]. Charis Messis avance que Constantinople est pour les Occidentaux la projection de la Troie mythique :

[42] Bercovici-Huard 1982, 122 (paragraphe 45).

[43] Eley 2011, 34.

[44] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 538–40.

[45] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 367–82.

[46] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 1498–1501 : Qar toute beautés vos abonde, / Et tant avés de gentelise, / Ja ne lairai ne vos eslise, / Car vos estes des sanc Hector.

[47] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 143–44 : En Aise sist la rice Troie, / Si fu ciés d'Aise et flors et voie.

[48] Cependant, cette description semble aussi faire écho à la littérature byzantine à l'époque des Comnènes qui décrit Constantinople, cf. Nilsson 2014a.

> Constantinople devient alors une projection de la Troie mythique, le berceau des peuples de l'Occident, et sa conquête s'inscrit dans un mouvement spatial et temporel de retour aux origines. L'Empire et sa capitale se transforment ainsi en territoire idéalisé qui leur revient de droit[49].

Dans *Partonopeu de Blois*, le chevalier occidental ne conquiert pas « Troie » ; il s'assimile à sa nouvelle ville plutôt que de vaincre Constantinople pour que les Français prétendent être dignes de l'héritage romain. Si on considère l'idée que Constantinople était une projection de la Troie mythique, on peut noter que dans le roman Mélior et Partonopeu se trouvent avoir la même origine, en suivant cette logique. Les héritiers de l'Empire romain se réunissent après avoir été séparés durant des siècles. On voit donc que, selon ce roman, les Français et les Byzantins sont originairement du même peuple. Lorsque Mélior explique à Partonopeu qu'il sera le roi de Byzance, elle raconte qu'il doit lui obéir[50]. Il ne semble pas possible pour Partonopeu de régner sans la dame byzantine. Elle est celle qui détient la souveraineté. Partonopeu semble surtout s'assimiler à la culture byzantine : vers la fin du roman, lorsqu'il va gagner la main de Mélior dans un tournoi, il s'adresse aux Français en parlant en grec[51]. Partonopeu a donc à la fin abandonné sa langue maternelle pour adopter la langue de sa nouvelle culture. Cupane discute comment, dans la tradition grecque et byzantine, la langue a toujours été une thématique importante pour la construction de l'identité grecque[52]. Par la transmission de la littérature, la culture grecque s'est conservée : les romans font un grand cas de cette transmission[53]. Le fait d'acquérir la langue d'une autre culture veut conséquemment indiquer le fait d'accueillir la tradition culturelle d'un peuple.

Partonopeu et Mélior sont unis non seulement par « l'héritage troyen », mais aussi (peut-être surtout) par le fait qu'ils partagent une dévotion pour la chrétienté tous les deux[54]. Dans *Partonopeu de Blois*, les Byzantins et les Français n'ont pas nécessairement deux identités différentes, mais sont tous d'un même peuple, semble dire le roman. Pendant l'entrée à Chief d'Oire, le chevalier noble Partonopeu est pourtant présenté comme pauvre et faible. Ainsi, le narrateur donne l'image d'un chevalier qui avant de

[49] Messis 2011, 153–54.

[50] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 1337–40 : Tote Besance est mes empires, / Vos en serés et rois et sires / Se mon consel volés tenir, / Qui legiers vos ert a soufrir.

[51] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 8711–12 : Bien lor est vis qu'il est François, / Mais il lor respont en grijois.

[52] Cupane 2016.

[53] Ibid., 304.

[54] C'est par exemple au moment où Mélior, dans leur premier rencontre dans la chambre obscure (voilà la scène qui suit l'entrée à Byzance de Partonopeu), prie à la Vierge que Partonopeu échange ses peurs pour le désir (*Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 1155–58 : Li enfes a peor de soi ; / Mais ce li tolt auques l'esfroi / Qu'il ot nomer sainte Marie, / C'or set que maufés n'est ce mie). Cependant, le sujet de la religion dans le roman mérite une étude plus étendue.

se rendre à Byzance a perdu son statut. Il existe donc une relation inégale entre les deux cultures, établie en faveur de Byzance.

Le style ekphrastique dans ce roman, notamment la réaction de Partonopeu lorsqu'il voit les objets d'art byzantins, semble correspondre à l'usage des ekphraseis dans la tradition grecque. Simon Goldhill avance que dans la littérature grecque, on prouve son niveau d'éducation par la capacité de réagir face à un bel objet[55]. Le talent d'articuler son appréciation de la beauté est un marqueur de *paideia*[56]. La *paideia*, à son tour, marque l'identité grecque la plus sophistiquée et donc joue un rôle essentiel pour l'identité grecque. Partonopeu en revanche, quand il voit la voile de soie, chasse ses peurs tout d'un coup, et quand il discerne la ville lumineuse dans la nuit, croit être victime de la magie. En d'autres mots, Partonopeu réagit comme quelqu'un qui n'a pas l'expérience de la beauté ; le narrateur, comme nous l'avons vu plus haut, excuse son protagoniste, en disant qu'il ne connaît pas le pays où il entre et par conséquent les auditeurs ne devaient pas s'étonner de sa réaction stupéfaite. Le narrateur montre, en revanche, un haut niveau de *paideia* en racontant l'apparition de Byzance ; il fait montre de son goût supérieur, au point de vouloir garder une certaine mesure pour ne pas perdre toute crédibilité aux yeux du lecteur. Partonopeu, par contre, ne sait pas comment l'apprécier, car, au moins au début, il n'est pas éduqué. Il perd ensuite sa virginité à Byzance, vit avec son amante byzantine, et, comme nous l'avons vu, à la fin du roman, Partonopeu s'identifie comme un grec, ce qui est indiqué par son choix de s'adresser aux Français en parlant en grec. À ce moment, Partonopeu a été éduqué, il a reçut sa *paideia*, et il est, par conséquent, prêt à se marier avec Mélior et à devenir l'empereur de Byzance.

Dans la littérature byzantine contemporaine, les poètes de la cour décrivent la splendeur des édifices impériaux à Constantinople, en ayant recours à des ekphraseis[57]. Dans *Partonopeu de Blois*, les ekphraseis dirigent la narration vers l'aventure érotique. Comme dans le cas d'*Hysminé et Hysminias*, l'ekphrasis chez *Partonopeu de Blois* joue un rôle important pour l'intrigue-même du roman, comme nous l'avons discuté plus haut dans cet article. Dans la littérature byzantine, le fait de raconter l'espace est une technique rhétorique à travers laquelle le poète montre son talent[58]. L'ekphrasis est une façon pour le poète d'offrir le plaisir de montrer un objet. Dans *Partonopeu de Blois*, offrir ce plaisir au public est simultanément le plaisir du narrateur à raconter. Plus haut dans cet article, j'ai déjà abordé le sujet de l'espace byzantin comme étant une métaphore de l'érotisme dans le roman ; ce que nous pouvons y ajouter est que la contem-

55 Goldhill 2011.
56 Ibid., 158.
57 Nilsson à paraître.
58 Ibid.

plation même de cet espace, le décrire et peut-être plus important encore, le fait même d'écrire (le narrateur dit dans le prologue qu'il *escrit* son œuvre[59]), sont des activités liées au plaisir. Dans le prologue, le narrateur décrit ainsi la nature :

> Le soir venu, le soleil se couche et il resplendit à nouveau de l'aurore au couchant. Voici que la grisaille disparaît : le ciel est clair, l'air est pur. Le temps est doux et paisible ; la terre engourdie renaît à la vie ; l'herbe verdoie, les fleurs s'ouvrent ; les bois revivent et reverdissent[60].

Dans ce passage on constate déjà l'importance de l'espace dans les choix rhétoriques du narrateur, qui place ses auditeurs dans une mise en scène nocturne ; il les fait s'imaginer la vue d'un soleil au couchant et sentir l'air pur. Ainsi, dans tout début du récit, le narrateur dresse une scène pour le public ; il peint un espace paisible, adressé à leur imaginaire. À la suite du prologue, il avertit ses auditeurs avant de commencer son œuvre, en mentionnant le risque existant qu'il « en retire un innocent plaisir »[61], et les prient qu'ils « n'y [voient] rien de frivole »[62]. Dans cette œuvre, la littérature est donc elle-même liée à l'érotisme. Plus bas dans le roman, lorsque Partonopeu et son amante Mélior sont ensemble, le fait de raconter et l'érotisme sont plus clairement liés l'un à l'autre :

> Il assouvit son désir avec Mélior, folâtre et plaisante longuement avec elle. Sa joie n'a rien d'étonnant, la blonde Mélior a tant de choses plaisantes et profondes à lui dire, tant d'histoires des temps anciens à lui raconter, que même les plus avertis ne manqueraient pas d'y trouver un enseignement. […] sa voix douce et mélodieuse […][63].

Le narrateur dit qu'il n'est pas étonnant si Partonopeu ressent de la joie, car Mélior sait raconter tant de choses. La thématique du plaisir revient plus bas dans le roman, lorsque Partonopeu, de nouveau faible et dans un statut misérable, est emmené sur l'île byzantine de Salence, où on l'aide à retrouver ses forces. Une manière de l'aider est de lui fournir des lettres écrites par son amante (mais qui sont en fait écrites par sa petite-sœur Urraque), lettres qui le rétablissent : « Elle lui fait fréquemment parvenir, comme si elles étaient de Mélior, de fausses lettres pleines de nouvelles conformes à ses souhaits, qui le remplissent de joie et de réconfort. »[64].

[59] *Partonopeu de Blois*, v. 70.

[60] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 13–20 : Li solaus se torne al serain / Et s'enbielist et soir et main. / Li ciels est clers, li airs est purs, / Adiés s'en vait li tans oscu[rs]. / L'ore est et soés et serie ; / La terre esmuet de mort a vie, / L'erbe verdoie et la flors nest ; / Vie et verdors ces bos revest.

[61] *Partonopeu de Blois*, v. 75 : Se [je me g]eu sains vilonie].

[62] *Partonopeu de Blois*, v. 76 : [Nel m'a]tornés pas a folie.

[63] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 1857–65 : Od Mélior a son delit ; / Assés i jue, assés i rit, / Et n'est mervelle s'il a joie, / Car tant li seit conter la bloie / Et de deduit et de grant sens / Que nus ne set tant bien entendre / Qui ne peüst de lui apprendre. / Douce et soef a le parole.

[64] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 6207–10 : Sovent li fait fait faus briés venir / Qui molt li dient son plaisir / Con s'il de Melior venissent ; / Molt l'en haitent et aliegissent.

On pourrait dire que pour *Partonopeu de Blois*, le plaisir des lettres est aussi important que le plaisir de l'amour. Le narrateur représente lui-même l'engagement et la passion pour le récit. Ce roman est surtout un récit sur l'acte de composer une narration, et nous dirions que c'est dans l'orientation vers diverses traditions et différentes vues sur la littérature, articulées dans la narration même, que ce roman se rend particulier et unique. C'est dans l'opération narrative, comme nous l'avons vu à propos de l'usage de l'espace narratif qu'on peut tracer la subjectivité du récit. C'est donc dans le réemploi des formes et des registres que chaque œuvre se rend novatrice et particulière. Dans le cas de *Partonopeu de Blois*, il s'agit de mêler les traditions latine et française à la tradition byzantine.

CONCLUSION

Comment pouvons-nous donc tracer la voix subjective du narrateur de l'œuvre ? Au début de son récit, le narrateur avoue son but : il veut offrir au public la représentation du mal et du bien, pour que le public puisse ainsi réfléchir.

L'histoire narrée a pour but principal de susciter chez le public des réflexions morales :

> Pour cette raison, sachez que cet écrit contiendra nombre des bonnes et de mauvaises choses. Je traiterai des unes et autres pour qu'on apprenne à faire le bien et à proscrire le mal. Voilà quel enseignement pourra en tirer celui qui saura l'écouter et voudra bien chercher à le comprendre[65].

Le narrateur utilise des images antithétiques dans son récit ; il met l'Occident face à l'Orient en appliquant l'usage rhétorique des ekphraseis, et crée une Byzance imaginaire qui rend le héros français pauvre et misérable. Si nous acceptons la possibilité de l'influence byzantine dans la composition de ce roman, nous voyons une élaboration des traditions littéraires diverses qui, lorsqu'elles se mélangent, font un tout particulier et précis. Le mélange des traditions littéraires montre la présence possible d'une voix dans le texte qui témoigne d'une situation historique particulière. En d'autres mots, grâce à l'analyse narratologique de *Partonopeu de Blois*, nous pouvons discerner une compréhension enrichie du contexte de l'œuvre, le liant éventuellement aux voyageurs occidentaux qui firent ce grand voyage à travers l'Europe pour voir la métropole de l'Orient. Peut-être avec leurs voyages, voyageaient aussi des récits et des traditions.

Vers la fin du roman, Partonopeu a obtenu sa *paideia*. Il n'est plus misérable face à la splendeur byzantine, mais il est *chez lui* et choisit le grec pour s'adresser à ses compa-

[65] *Partonopeu de Blois*, vv. 129–34 : Por ce vos di qu'en cest escrit / Avra maint bien et maint mal dit. / L'un et l'autre metrons en letre / Por faire bien et mal demetre. / Ce puet de cest escrit apprendre / Qui l'ot et seit et violt entendre.

triotes français. Nous avons discuté la manière dont le narrateur, grâce à la focalisation interne et externe et l'usage du style ekphrastique permet au public d'imaginer Byzance. Le narrateur joue avec les oppositions pour faire réfléchir son public, et semble donc leur offrir à la fois une rhétorique soignée et un message politique, indiquant que Byzance est majestueuse face à l'Occident médiéval.

RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Source primaire

Le roman de Partonopeu de Blois. Édition, traduction et introduction de Olivier Collet et Pierre-Marie Joris. Paris 2005.

Sources secondaires

Bercovici-Huard, C. 1982. « Partonopeus de Blois et la couleur byzantine » dans *Images et signes de l'Orient dans l'Occident médiéval. Aix-en-Provence*, 179–96. Accessible en ligne : http://books.openedition.org/pup/2848.

Bruckner, M. T. 1993. « From genealogy to romance and continuation in the fabulous history of *Partonopeu de Blois* » *L'Esprit Créateur* 33, 27–39.

Ciggaar, K. N. 1996. *Western Travellers to Constantinople: The West and Byzantium, 962–1204: Cultural and Political Relations*. Leiden.

Cupane, C 2016. « Noi e gli altri. Forme di identità e alterità in zone di contatto », dans E. Creazzo, G. Lalomia, A. Manganaro (éd.) *Letteratura, alterità, dialogicità Studi in onore di Antonio Pioletti*. Catania.

de Jong, I. 2014. *Narratology and Classics: A Practical Guide*. Oxford.

Devereaux, R. 2012. *Constantinople and the West in Medieval French Literature: Renewal and Utopia*. Cambridge.

Eley, P. 2011. Partonopeus de Blois*: Romance in the Making*. Cambridge.

Genette, G. 1972. *Figures III*. Paris.

Goldhill, S. 2001. « The erotic eye: visual stimulation and cultural conflict » dans S. Goldhill (éd.), *Being Greek under Rome : Cultural Identity, the Second Sophistic and the Development of Empire*. Cambridge, 154–94.

Hilton, C. 1984. *Convention and Innovation in* Partonopeu de Blois *(France)*. Amherst.

Hörandner, W. 2012. « Theodore Prodromos and the City », dans Odorico, P. and Ch. Messis (éd). *Villes de toute beauté : l'ekphrasis des cités dans les littératures byzantine et byzantino-slaves*. Paris, 49–62.

Kay, S. 1990. *Subjectivity in Troubadour Poetry*. Cambridge Studies in French 31, Cambridge.

Messis, Ch. 2011. « Lectures sexuées de l'altérité. Les Latins et identité romaine menacée pendant les derniers siècles de Byzance » *JÖB* 61, 151–70.

Moore, M. 2014. *Exchanges in Exoticism: Cross-Cultural Marriage and the Making of the Mediterranean in Old French Romance*. Toronto.

Muthesius, A. M. 1993. « Silk, power and diplomacy in Byzantium », dans *Textiles in Daily Life: Proceedings of the Third Biennial Symposium of the Textile Society of America, September 24–26, 1992*. Earleville, MD 1993. Accessible en ligne : http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1579&context=tsaconf.

Nilsson, I. 2001. *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Techniques and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites'* Hysmine and Hysminias. SBU 7, Uppsala.

——— 2014a. « Komnenian Literature », dans D. Sakel (éd.) *Byzantine Culture: Papers from the Conference 'Byzantine Days of Istanbul' May 21–23 2010*. Ankara.

——— 2014b. *Raconter Byzance : la littérature au XIIe siècle*. Séminaires byzantins 3, Paris.

——— à paraître. « Describing, experiencing, narrating: the use of ekphrasis (c. 1081–1330s) », dans C. Barber and F. Spingou (éd.), *Medieval Texts on Byzantine Art and Aesthetics, vol. 3. From Alexios I Komnenos to the rise of Hesychasm (1081–ca. 1330).* Cambridge.

Papaioannou, S. 2014. « Voice, signature, mask: The Byzantine Author », dans A. Pizzone (éd.), *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature.* Berlin.

——— 2013. *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*. Cambridge.

Söderblom Saarela, E. (2016). « L'ἀνδρεία féminine dans la courtoisie française – une influence byzantine ? », dans E. Egedi-Kovács (éd), *Byzance et l'Occident III* : Écrits et manuscrit*s*. Budapest, 137–51.

Walters, L. 1992. « The poet-narrator's address to his lady as structural device in 'Partonopeu de Blois' » *Medium Aevum* 61/2 (1992), 229–41.

Webb, R. 1999. « *Ekphrasis* ancient and modern: the invention of a genre » *Word & Image*, 15. 1, 7–18.

Uri, S. P. 1953. « Some remarks on Partonopeus de Blois » *Neophilologus* 37.1, 83–98.

Zink, M. 1985. *La subjectivité littéraire : autour du siècle de saint Louis*. Paris.

4

LETTERS AND SPACE: FUNCTION AND MODELS OF EPISTOLARY NODES IN SERBIAN HAGIOGRAPHY

Milan Vukašinović

While narratological approaches are slowly gaining ground in Byzantine Studies, they have not quite reached the study of medieval Serbian literary works. In most cases, critical editions are still nonexistent and answers to textual dilemmas remain inconclusive. In spite of this, I should like to address and contextualize some structural questions concerning two of the first original and extensive literary compositions in the Serbian language: the *Life of Saint Simeon* (1216) written by Stefan the First-Crowned,[1] and the *Life of Saint Sava* written by an Athonite monk, Domentijan, in 1253/4.[2]

[1] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 14–106. For information on the author, as well as the dating and the general overview of the work see Bojović 1995, 159–63, 349–64.

[2] Domentijan, *Life of Sava*. Juhas-Georgievska (2003, 335–38) gives an English summary of the textual study. The first original literary compositions in Serbian are inseparably interlaced with the advent of the Nemanja dynasty to the throne of Raška. Entering into complicated war – peace relationships with Byzantium and Hungary, the grand župan Stefan Nemanja (1168–1196, after that year referred to as the monk Simeon) established a certain level of sovereignty in the central Balkans. (Fine 1991 [1983], 243–47; Kalić 1994a, 208–211; Kalić 1994b, 251–62. Blagojević 2011, 100–36.) His two sons, Stefan the First-Crowned (grand župan 1196–1217, king 1217–1228) and Rastko-Sava, the first archbishop of the autocephalous Serbian archbishopric (1219–1233), became the first Serbian writers. In two charters of the Chilandar monastery (*Zbornik* 67–69, 79–83.), founded on Mount Athos by Nemanja and his sons, and in the typikon for the Studenica monastery in Raška (*Studenica typikon* 152–92.), we can find the first (auto)biographical literary segments on the founders of these monasteries. However, the two *Lives* presented here seem to have been the first original literary works that circulated independently. While for both of these saints' *Lives* there are relatively recent non-critical editions with modern Serbian translations, the nineteenth-century edition of Domentijan is still used more frequently, since it is more widely available, especially outside of Serbia. The digitized version of this edition can be consulted on the web page of the National Library of Serbia (see bibliography). The traditional classification of these works as 'hagiobiographies' (as in Protić 1897, 8, 13; Bojović 1995, 147–89; Bojović 2001, 66; Lunde 2011, 375) does not suffice nor does it do them justice. The usage of this term projects modern historiographical biases of a factual and literary nature onto the medieval context and

A short overview of the general characteristics of this material is due, before engaging with the specific traits concerning their epistolary parts. Although the Serbian hagiographic tradition is deeply rooted in Byzantine models, early Serbian saints' *Lives* offer unique and creative traits, especially in their structure and narrative. These texts are complex, amalgamated and generically elastic compositions. Their language is not vernacular but is not too far from it.[3] The two works that concern me here are two extensive first-person narratives. This 'I' however, passes playfully between the experiencing and the telling narrator,[4] and even occasionally designates itself as 'he'.[5]

Certain episodes are told in a very vivid manner, with elements of suspense and even humour.[6] We hear of bloodthirsty and almsgiving kings,[7] of patriarchs, popes,[8] sultans[9] and heretics,[10] courts and monasteries, ships, pirates, and long journeys.[11] The narratives are told in a seemingly chronological sequence, though some events are misplaced. The authors allow themselves to use prolepses and include events in non-chronological order since the fate of their characters is a self-fulfilling prophecy.[12]

curtails the generic flexibility of hagiographic accounts. Hereafter, I shall refer to them as hagiographies or saints' *Lives*, as their authors did.

[3] It has already been shown that at least some of the Serbian medieval authors were well aware of the language register they were writing in. See, for example, Ivić 1979, 168–69, with a resume in French on 175.

[4] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 18, 72: "[...] I, by the name of Stefan, unworthy and sinful, being saddened before his [i.e. his father, Simeon] departure, born and even raised by him, I shall recount to you the birth, life, and virtues of this holy lord of mine. [...] feeling the weakness in my body from many toils and wounds, with desire, much haste and humble plea, I informed him [i.e. his brother, Sava], saying [...]". Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 360: "And when I was in Jerusalem, holy hundred-years-old men, who had seen the first saints before that [...] and then have been his [i.e. Sava's] contemporaries and co-ascetics [...] used to call him an earthly angel and heavenly man [...]." All translations are mine.

[5] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 56. In Genettian terms (Genette 1972, 254–56), Stefan the First-Crowned, while staying an extradiegetic narrator of his father's life, takes up, at different times, the position of auto-, homo- or heterodiegetic narrator. Domentijan is less visible as a narrator and occasionally delegates the narration to alleged eye-witnesses, that is intradiegetic narrators (Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 360; introduction to this segment quoted above, n. 4).

[6] As in Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 254–56, when Sava first brings on a miraculous heat over the kingdom of Hungary, and then asks for ice from King Andrew II, since he was used to drinking his wine cold. The king fails to provide it and Sava makes it hail by the power of his prayer, only to subtly mock the king, by sending him cups of ice.

[7] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 36.

[8] Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 246–48.

[9] Ibid 368.

[10] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 32–36.

[11] Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 344–52.

[12] Genette 1972, 82–89. Detailed analysis of this phenomenon in the *Life of Sava* from a stylistic point of view and under the term 'anticipation' in Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, XVII–XLII.

The 'actual world' or the setting of these texts is forged as a world in which the narrators and their heroes were taking an active part, presenting a stable category that embraces their spatial frames.[13] But the narration passes into the confines of the 'possible' biblical world, too, thus widening the story space. Also, at the points where these two worlds meet, we enter into the world of God's grace and miracles on earth.[14] The readers' cognitive systems weave all these worlds into a single storyworld.[15] One of the emblematic traits of these works is the abundant epistolary correspondence between the characters. In this article, I first define the concept of *epistolary nodes* as places where the idea of a letter being sent or received has a narratological function. I then argue that the phenomenon of epistolary nodes in these saints' *Lives* is closely connected with the construction and communication of their storyworlds and with their spatial elements in particular. After examining their form and structural position inside the narratives, I try to determine their function and the possible models for this narrative strategy. Since the existence of a textual model is difficult to establish in this case, I propose looking for it in the social context that they were composed in, by engaging with the postclassical narrative theories of cognitive scripts and schemata.[16]

THEN HE WROTE, SAYING…

The letters appear in these works in diverse forms, from high literary compositions which are several pages long, to a couple of phrases of short greetings or orders, and messages orally transmitted by messengers. Letters travel inside the same town or mil-

[13] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 30: "They hired the Greek soldiers, the Franks and the Turks and other nations advancing on the Holy One [Simeon] and they entered his fatherland in the place called Pantino."

[14] Best seen in parallel accounts on Moses and Sava in Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 374–94.

[15] I am using this term as it is comprehensively and usefully defined in Herman 2002, 5: "storyworlds are mental models of who did what to and with whom, when, where, why and in what fashion in the world in which recipients relocate […] as they work to comprehend a narrative." The concept is elaborated on in ibid. 9–15, 266. See also Weller and Eriksen in this volume.

[16] These terms, borrowed from cognitive sciences, are used to "describe knowledge representations storing past experiences" (Herman 2002, 85). They can be both static (schemata) and dynamic (scripts). They rely on the conventions of what doing something means in a given social context. For example, eating in a restaurant implies a set of actions from ordering a meal to paying the bill. However, when this experience is presented in a narrative form, enumerating all of these actions is rendered unnecessary by the scripts based on previous experiences of both the author and the audience. Scripts and stories form a dynamic relation. Herman 2002, 90: "It is not that the stories are recognizable only if and insofar as they tell me what I already know; rather, stories stand in a certain relation to what I know, focusing attention on the unusual and the remarkable against a backdrop made up of highly structured patterns of belief and expectation."

itary camp, from one state to another, or even from this world to the other.[17] They are accompanied by gifts or instructions on the form of their delivery. They actively participate in the plot by causing reactions – emotional, kinetic or even miraculous ones. In the tables below, all letters included or mentioned in the two *Lives* have been listed.[18] In the first part of the tables, only the formally separated letters, in which the voice changes or narration passes into direct speech, are numbered. Certain excerpts that might have been oral messages sent through couriers are included for several reasons. Firstly, we cannot establish a clear typology of the documents inside the text: the terms letter, epistle, report or book are used without any obvious regularity. Also, the authors most frequently tag the letters with the words "I (he/they) said/wrote/sent", without any regularity either. Consequently, when the letter is introduced by "he said", this does not mean that he did not write.

For example, letter S3, in which Simeon asks his son to help him rebuild Chilandar, is introduced as follows:

> […] this holy and honorable old man [Simeon], together with the one called abba Sava, *sent* to his son [Stefan], whom he had left in his fatherland to rule over the entire Serbian land, to send them what is needed to build and renovate the church of Panagia, *telling* him thus: Oh, dear child and servant of Christ, may this be known to you! If Panagia has left you to rule in that place by the pleasure of Lord God and with my blessing, I am *writing* [to tell] you that I found a deserted place of the Presentation of the Most Holy Mother of God, amidst the Holy Mountain, called Chilandar […][19]

However, after the letter has been quoted, the narration continues: "When this son of his received the embassy and the *epistle* of his saintly lord Simeon, with all of his heart and great joy, he rose from his throne and fell to the ground, in tears […]".[20] On the other hand, in letter S7, Sava "sends a *letter* with the following words", while Stefan, the addressee, is "*hearing* the words of this reverend man".[21] There is no difference in style, complexity or length between the letters that are marked as such and the ones intro-

[17] Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 254–56, 142, 186–90.

[18] In the only study that I was able to find on this topic (Juhas-Georgievska 1998) only six 'epistles' were noted in Domentijan's *Life of Sava.* I argue for a more inclusive approach to the notion of epistolary correspondence. Furthermore, Juhas-Georgievska's paper deals with modern concepts of factual and fictitious that she projects onto the medieval text, claiming that the author used factual documents to gain credibility with his audience. I do not see how this simplistic view can help us understand either the text or its social context better. However, in the mentioned study and in the introduction to the latest edition of this text, Juhas-Georgievska provides a detailed and useful stylistic analysis of the longest letter in Domentijan's text. See Domentijan, *Life of Sava*, XXII–XXIV.

[19] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 56. All italics are mine.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid 74 and 76.

duced by "I/he said". The long and stylistically embellished letter S4, filled with biblical quotations and parallels, has an interesting double tag:

> He not only gave gifts but also took [parts] of his land [and gave them, too], so it would be enough to the holy lord and the monks in that place, *speaking* like this to the hegoumenos Metodije: Bow and *tell* my lord: thus *speaks* your servant, all your commands are carried out, and your heart's desires fulfilled. For which manner or mind should detain my miserable self from fulfilling your commands? How can I forget your good and sweet education?[22]

Since the letters and the literary texts in general, we might argue, were meant to be read out loud, there is no reason for us to try and distinguish the written from the orally transmitted messages. They are all a part of written, literary works. Even if any of these missives had a real-world model, the form in which they are integrated into the text is purely a literary one. And from the narrative point of view, both of these types have the same function inside the text.

EPISTOLARY NODES

I have also included, in the second part of the tables, every mention of a letter or a message where the text itself is not quoted. This is justified by the intertextual evidence. As we are dealing with narratives that cover the same period of time and the same events, often borrowing even the same phrasing from the older texts, we can easily spot the places where all of the texts either quote or mention a specific letter. Letters get shortened or elaborated, quoted letters get reduced to comments, comments develop into full-text letters, and the number of exchanged letters is multiplied.

Thus letter S1, in which Simeon shortly informs his son Sava that he took monastic vows, becomes an elaborate piece of literature in D1. It introduces the "come!" formula. The same happens to Sava's response to this letter. S2 becomes D2, taking up almost an entire chapter, and it mirrors the mentioned formula: "Come, my lord and father [...] Come, good shepherd of your God-given flock [...] Come, light-bearer of God [...] Come, ray of the sensible East [...] Come, lover of your child [...]."[23] D3 uses the same phrasing as S6 but erases the middle part of the letter. On the other hand, D4 takes the short S7 notice and expands it significantly.

[22] Ibid 58–60.

[23] Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 42–64. For a stylistic analysis of this letter see ibid, XXII–XXIX.

S1: May it be known to you [i.e. Sava], my favourite in Christ, that for what I [i.e. Simeon] prayed and wanted and asked for with all my strength and from all my soul, my Creator took mercy on me, not according to my trespasses, but to His abundant and unexpressed mercy and philanthropy, he granted me what I wished for, his honorable angelic schema. Rejoice for me, you too, and pray for me to your Governor, who granted me, unworthy, the entrance, even in the twelfth hour, to answer with you, as a laborer in Christ's vineyard and receive my award.	**D1**: If the Lord pleases thus with you [i.e. Sava], our beloved child, come then to us [i.e. Simeon and Ana] so that we see your God-enlightened face and get sated on your lovely beauty. And you will stave off many a sorrow from our hearts, and preserve our eyes from many a source of tears. Come, God-sent light and heavenly ray, announce the true Sun [...]Come, God-sent comfort [...] Come, our spiritual and cordial joy, that cheered us upon your birth, by the Holy Ghost, by the unspeakable joy; and now cheer us up by the sight of your holy beauty, so we can behold the angelic schema you carry and by the grace of your prayers that we partake in the kingdom of God, that you pleased to seek, leaving this earthly kingdom. Come, God-chosen servant of Father and Son and the Holy Ghost, equal to angels, [...] so you could use the comfort and force of the holiest and life-giving Spirit to dress us up in fear of God and his inheritance, which is in your fatherland, and that we all settle with our Lord God, serving Father and Son and the Holy Ghost in eternal centuries, amen.
S7: I [i.e. Sava] received your [i.e. Stefan's] epistle with love and not ignoring your pleas, I am carrying the relics of your Saint [i.e. Simeon], the ones that you desire, and I travel with them myself, together with reverend monks of this holy place, that our Lord [i.e. Simeon] chose to live in. Therefore, O dear (one), prepare to meet him.	**D4**: I [i.e. Sava] received your [i.e. Stefan's] epistle with love and not ignoring your tearful pleas, I am carrying the relics of your Saintly lord [i.e. Simeon], which you desire, going with them myself, together with reverend monks of the Holy Mountain, in which your holy lord chose to live, serving his God and his All-holy Mother, [from where] he found a good order for himself in heavenly family and enriched his God-given flock by godly gifts from the richest Heavenly Father, wanting to guard that flock after his death. Because of your good faith and warm love towards him, here he comes towards you carrying the victories of heavenly forces, the force of God and christened weapons, wanting to beat all of your foes and enemies in war by his God-given meekness. Therefore, O dear (one), prepare to meet him.

Also, in Domentijan's *Life of Sava*, after Stefan had informed his brother that their father's grave had stopped pouring myrrh (D5), Sava sends the messenger Ilarije to his father, "alive after death," with the instructions on how to read his letter, but the letter itself is not quoted (DII4). However, in the later *Life of Sava* by Teodosije, another Athonite monk, probably written towards the end of the thirteenth century,[24] Stefan's letter is somewhat rephrased. But we can also read the response of Sava, who

> [...] wrote in his own hand an epistle praying to his holy father as if he was alive, undead after death, saying: as if God commended you, be propitiated by us, venerable father, overlook any possible sin to God or disobedience to you done by your children, and you will cause that your grave, standing in the shade of the Holy Ghost, pours out myrrh as it did before [...].

[24] Špadijer 2010.

The messenger is instructed that the letter must not be opened or read by anyone, except himself, after the holy service on the grave of Simeon. Sava then writes a separate letter to his brother. After the miracle has worked, Stefan sends back the messenger with much gold and a bottle of myrrh to Sava.[25] Accordingly, what was a single quoted letter and a reference in Domentijan's work, becomes two letters and three epistolary references in Teodosije's.

Hence, we can witness the appearance of what might be called *epistolary nodes* in these texts. Those are the places when the idea or the cognitive schema of a letter being sent is evoked and introduced in the narrative, whether the letter itself is quoted or not. Intertextual proofs show that letters change, appear or disappear, but these nodes remain in their places in most of the cases.

LETTERS IN SPACE

The spatial or geographical scope of these narratives is almost inevitably determined by their heroes. We cannot call them focalizers in the strict sense of the term because the readers are not experiencing the world through their senses, but through those of the narrator.[26] However, the action cannot move from the court to the battlefield or from a monastery to a cave if a character is absent. There is a sort of unity of space and action in the narration, on the level of story space, in the sense that the spatial frame of the narrative cannot change without the actor moving or being carried into it.[27]

[25] Teodosije*, Life of Sava* 117–24; 120.

[26] I am using the term *focalisation* in the sense theorized by Mieke Bal (1981, 44–45; 1997, 142–160). These texts make the fact that focalisation through the narrator is unavoidable, and is particularly obvious, because of the stylistic similarities between the parts externally focalized by the all-knowing narrator and the embedded parts of both *homodiegetic narratorial* and *homodiegetic figural focalisation* (Goran 2002, 691). Bal also points out a very tight connection between focalisation and the representation of narrative space (1997, 132–42).

[27] For the definition and the summary of previous treatments of these terms, especially 'spatial frame', 'story space' and 'narrative (or story) world' in narratological works, see Ryan 2014 [2012], 6–9, and Alber 2014 [2013], 11–20. An interesting aspect of these saints' *Lives* is that the narrators move freely through temporal frames, and even combine them (see above, n. 12), but they cannot move into a different spatial frame without the help of a character or a letter. The only exception to this rule in the *Life of Simeon* is the short passage on the Byzantine emperor Andronikos I that serves as an introduction to Nemanja's conquests. Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 36: "After this, another emperor has risen in Constantine's city, angry and bloodthirsty, and he spoiled the peace with the Venerable and the Holy One. Opening his mouth wide, he intended to swallow also the states of the others, which he did not do, the fool, nor did he achieve such intention, but wanting to harm the Harmless and the Holy One, he brought his own death upon him and a shame on his empire and desolation on his land."

However, when Sava first moves to Mount Athos, in both narratives, it becomes possible for the narrator to change the frame by introducing epistolary nodes. The letter permitted the narrator to change the frame from the Serbian court to the monastery of Vatopedi and describe Sava's actions and moods. When Sava writes back to his father, the readers find themselves in Raška again and they can follow the events on the court. The same is the case with the communication between the monks Simeon or Sava when they are on the Holy Mountain, and Stefan the First-Crowned in Raška. In that sense, the proximity of letters and prayers, as another type of embedded text, is very interesting. Formally, both are in direct speech, first person narratives. Functionally, just as the letters connect the frames of what is conceived as the actual world, so too the prayers create a link between the actual and the possible world of miracles. A noteworthy example is the case of the murder of Michael I Doukas of Epiros.

Stefan the First-Crowned as a narrator gives a summary report of Michael's conquest of Skodra and quotes a threatening letter that he, as a character, sent to Michael. Then he addresses the prayer to his father, Saint Simeon, who, in his turn, asks for help from Saint George, one of the protectors of the dynasty. Saint George then sends a vision to the hegoumenos of his monastery in Serbia:

> "Rise and preach my greatness! Because I was sent by the Lord to kill Michael the Greek, who is in the Dyrrachium area." And right away one of his [i.e. Michael's] slaves, standing up, stabbed him on his bed with a sword. He surrendered his soul to this evil death, to the shame of the spectators, and the joy of everybody who trusts in the Lord and his holy servants.[28]

It is as if the author needed either a letter and/or a prayer to transform the city of Skodra from a vague, mentioned place in the story space to an actual spatial frame.

STEPPING OUTSIDE

On the narrative level, epistolary nodes functioned as portals between different and distant places, connecting them in a continuous space, in the cases when the heroes did not travel. But what kind of function could they have in the construction of the storyworld, as a joint endeavour of the writer and his audience?[29] What cognitive script

[28] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 88–92.

[29] The term *audience* is used here in the sense of the actual consumers of the works, or as close as we can get to them. However, we must underline the importance of the implied audience, in the sense of characters, either directly addressed, or mentioned as listeners or spectators of the performance of the text as whole, or some of its embedded parts. As it has been noticed, these texts were written to be read out loud, at least partially. Stefan's work begins with a formula: "Come forth, O lovers of Christ, Come and see how the depth of God's mercy was revealed in us, earthly beings […]. That is why, bishops, hierarchs, priests, monks, friends and brethren in Lord, I, by the name of Stefan, […] will recount to you the birth, the life and the virtues of this holy

could have been activated in the mind of the original readers when a letter appeared in the text? Could this script also have a predominantly spatial connotation? This question must be examined carefully since these texts are not just the object of our study, but often at the same time the only source of information for the social context that generated cognitive scripts.

It is interesting to note how the introduction of a new place into the storyworld was connected with letter-exchange and signalled to the readers. The comparison of various introductions into the narrative of a very important place in Serbian medieval imaginary and ideology, Mount Athos, an impressive landscape of power, can be instructive. Stefan describes the alleged escape of his younger brother Rastko:

> And he [i.e. Nemanja] sent his celebrated nobles and princes to all his lands to look for this boy [i.e. Rastko/Sava]. And after searching lands and places, they found that he moved into the Holy Mountain, into the monastery of the all-holy Mother of God, called Vatopedi, and received an apostolic and an angelic schema. When they came back, they informed them right away about everything that happened, how they found him and what they saw.[30]

No letters, no messages, only messengers. Nemanja will have written to his son only after he resolved the situation in the country (S1). Domentijan tells the story at more length. Nemanja sends his soldiers to Mount Athos, and the Thessalonian authorities do, too, under the orders of the emperor Isaac. The Athonite authorities are warned by a letter not to keep young Rastko. When Rastko tricks them and takes a monastic vow overnight, he gives the soldiers his hair to take it to his parents as proof.[31] In Teodosije's account, however, Nemanja sends one of his dukes with the letter to the consul of Thessalonike, asking him to get his son back. "If you should console my heart like this, my dear, he said, you will receive many an honor as a gift of our love. If you should ignore our request, know that instead of love, we will become your enemies." When the consul reads the letter, he sends another, longer one, to the protos of Mount Athos. Finally,

lord of mine." (Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 14, 18). Also in ibid 78: "Hear about another wonderful miracle, brothers!" The audience that appears in the narrative parts of the texts themselves is indicative, too. The main actors are very often surrounded by a group of people. In addition to the regular role of witnesses of miracles in saints' *Lives,* remarked on, among others, by Monika Fludernik (ibid 78; Fludernik 1996, 79–85.), I would argue that the construction of the hagiographic storyworlds implied the participation of the audience in the work, similar to the one practised in Christian liturgy. For that purpose, the authors used direct speech tagged to the third person plural. The voice is given to courtiers, monks, sailors or people in general. Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 54, 104; Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 34, 350.

30 Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 48.

31 Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 14–18.

when Rastko becomes Sava, he addresses a long hortatory letter to his parents. Both of these letters are quoted.[32]

In Stefan's text, we know and hear almost nothing of the distant Mount Athos at this stage. It is only later, with the exchange of letters between Sava and Nemanja that the readers or listeners get to enter the Holy Mountain. In Domentijan's work, we are introduced into that space by an official letter of a high authority. It is not clear from the text if the emperor, the consul of Thessalonike or the grand župan was the one who sent it. By the time of the composition of this text, Mount Athos, and the Chilandar monastery were already firmly based in the official royal narrative of the Serbian rulers and, we can suppose, in the imagination of at least some of their subjects. Finally, Teodosije too, the writer of the epoch of king Milutin's southern conquests, introduces the reader into the most important regional center, Thessalonike. This city does not appear in the first *Life,* we only hear of the Thessalonian soldiers in the second one, and we finally enter the city in the third one. There is an obvious extension of the possible places for the unwinding of the narrative. In other words, the void between the spatial frames of the Serbian court and Mount Athos in the *setting* of the thirteenth-century Balkans is bridged exclusively by either main characters or their letters. Moreover, seen diachronically, it is the epistolary nodes that 'stitch' together the narrative space, in the sense that they transport such locations as the cities of Skodra, Thessalonike or even Constantinople into the space relevant to the plot (*story space*) and then turn them into the immediate surroundings of actual events (*narrative frames*).

I argue that epistolary nodes in these works were destined to announce a transition to a kind of conquest of the unknown, to mark or trigger a possible change or widening of the storyworld, by playing off the known and the unusual on the level of spatial schemata and scripts of the readers or listeners.[33] Symbolic overtaking of a new space was made possible and justified by the letter-exchange. In this sense, it is not surprising that one of the earliest presumably real letters from the first half of the thirteenth century was written by Sava from his pilgrimage to Jerusalem.[34]

IN SEARCH OF MODELS

Finally, I shall address the question of written composition that could have served as a model for introducing epistolary nodes in these texts.[35] Although these *Lives* are

[32] Teodosije, *Life of Sava* 11–19; 11–12.

[33] See n. 16 above.

[34] *Poslanica* 230–231; Ivić 1979, 168–69.

[35] I find that *written* is more appropriate than *literary* here, since what is considered to be the first Serbian literary compositions were texts inserted into two non-literary documents (see above n.

deemed to be the first pieces of Serbian literature, it is clear that they reproduced some models from earlier Slavonic or Greek literature.[36] Important religious figures such as Sava Nemanjić and Domentijan, who maintained constant communication with Mount Athos and other parts of the *oikoumenē*, certainly could and did read and translate Greek literature. We can rightfully assume that an important political player such as Stefan the First-Crowned did, too. It is, however, impossible to establish a direct textual link or a transmission of narrative strategy between these texts and the earlier ones, when it comes to the specific phenomenon of epistolary nodes.[37] The social context seems to be the only place where we can look for the source of these peculiarities. In that sense, I would like to propose three possible models of interaction that could have produced the cognitive scripts activated by the embedded letters.

2). It is also hard to sustain the difference between the literary and the written, when discussing medieval Serbia, without projecting our own categories onto the past. Furthermore, since the storyworld stands in a dynamic, bidirectional relation to 'reality' (Herman 2002, 90), it is rather safe to suppose that the cognitive schemata and scripts that apply to the literary and 'non-literary' or 'documentary' letters were basically the same. Still, I believe that a different logic should be recognized between letters embedded in literature and letter-collections as an extremely developed literary form in Byzantium (Mullett 1997; Papaioannou 2012; Riehle 2012). While the latter were sometimes developed by Greek authors whose contact with the Slavonic-speaking population is attested, the influence of these works on Serbian hagiography does not seem easily ascertainable to me.

36 For example, like the hagiography of Simeon and Sava, the *Lives* of the apostles to the Slavs, Cyril and Methodios, are exceedingly dialogized, following their missionary character and the necessity to debate and persuade. Lunde 2011, 370.

37 Letters appear in Byzantine hagiography, but less frequently and possibly with a different function. See for example Høgel (2015, 307–15), who argues for the authenticity of the letter of Theodore Graptos included in his saint's *Life*. Vivid generic originality, including the embedding of epistolary correspondence, was a feature of the novels produced in Komnenian Constantinople, with which the Nemanjid dynasty was closely linked. The twelfth-century Athonite milieu also produced an interesting sort of a proto-epistolary novel (Mullett 2006, 3–8; 21–28). However, neither can we note a clear structural or functional resemblance between these narratives, nor can we be sure that the authors of Serbian hagiography had an opportunity to read them at all. Furthermore, as it has been affirmed in both ancient manuals and modern scholarship, the letters in Greek narratives had an ethopoieic function, that is, they were used for more colorful stylistic depiction of their senders' personality. Such is the case with the *Alexander Romance* (Jouanno 2002, 19). However, there is no proof of the presence of this romance in Serbia before the fourteenth century. The earlier Slavonic version, the so-called *Chronographic Alexander,* which is maybe a tenth-century Bulgarian translation of Pseudo-Callisthenes, probably never reached Serbia and left no textual trace in the later so-called *Serbian Alexander* (Marinković 1969, 17–63). It is also far-fetched to theorize the same function of the embedded letters in Serbian saints' *Lives* since the voice of the narrator and the voices of different characters' letters are too similar for the latter to be ethopoieic.

It has been proven that letters were exchanged between the Serbian and the Constantinopolitan court as early as the tenth century. These letters must have been written in Greek, and read or translated out loud. They might have been the first written compositions seen by the Serbs after, or maybe even before, liturgical texts. They were pragmatic and symbolic instruments of power of Byzantium over the local archons who, in their eyes, were state officials. It was a way to claim a territory.[38] Even if it might seem like an obvious conclusion, I accordingly think it is important to note that a model for the use and insertion of letters into literature was their use in 'real life' and the scripts that implied taking a physical or an ideological control over a space which stood behind them.

In both texts, the authors are very interested in setting the precise borders of the land controlled by Serbian rulers. The names of destroyed and conquered towns, as well as of lands under one's rule are deliberately cited.[39] This is yet another similarity between the saints' *Lives* and the *prooimia* of Serbian charters that were not only documents kept in a treasury, but in some cases also inscribed and exposed visibly in the church.[40] Direct speech, tone, specific speech acts, interest in questions of control over space and publicity of the documents present parallels between the conceptions of letter and legal document in this epoch.

And although the letters in the text do not voice secular or canonical legal matters, they do so with moral, Christian norms. In that manner, they seem to be modelled on the biblical epistles, especially those of Saint Paul. They are not only frequently cited but the heroes of the *Lives* are also compared to this apostle. The kind of narrative setting in which the letters were placed – first person, direct speech addresses – might have permitted the speaker to take over the voice of the character and make his reading more lively and direct. A case in point is offered by the multiple voices in D2, where the narrator (Domentijan) cites the letter of Sava, who cites the epistle of Paul, who cites the words of Jesus. Whether on the level of communication between characters, between narrator and addressee or between implied author and implied reader, as in the biblical narrative, "[...] letters are always sent as surrogate for a visit", to mark one's presence in a certain place.[41] Furthermore, Paul's epistolary presence signified the religious conquest and purification of a certain place and widening of the Christian space.

I have argued that the emblematic phenomenon of embedding epistolary correspondence into the first Serbian saints' *Lives* was strongly connected to the construction of spatial elements of their storyworlds, and further, through cognitive schemata

[38] Živković 2012, 326–31.

[39] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon* 20, 38; Domentijan, *Life of Sava* 2.

[40] Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon*, CIII–CXIV 110–22.

[41] Cousar 1996, 30.

and scripts, to the lived social reality of their authors and readers. Considering the extant sources, we should look for the models of this narrative strategy of Serbian hagiographers in these three directions: real letters, charters, and biblical epistles. This kind of approach might help us reevaluate and maybe even abandon the strict line between literary and documentary sources drawn in the early years of historiographical method. By acknowledging the narrativity of human experience in general, we might get closer to a better understanding of the ways in which people perceived the world around them and told stories about it.

TABLE 1: LETTERS IN STEFAN THE FIRST-CROWNED, LIFE OF SIMEON

	SENDER	ADDRESSEE	CONTENT	COMMENT	PAGE
S1	Simeon (Raška)	Sava (Mt Athos)	Simeon informs Sava that he has become a monk	Sava rejoices on receiving the letter	52
S2	Sava (Mt Athos)	Simeon (Raška)	Sava responds to the letter and invites Simeon to join him on Mt Athos	Simeon starts the journey on receiving the letter	52
S3	Simeon & Sava (Mt Athos)	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška) / 3rd person	Simeon asks for money to build Chilandar	Messengers are mentioned, Stefan cries with joy on receiving it	54–56
S4	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška) 3rd person	Simeon (Mt Athos)	Stefan sends gifts in response	Oral message is transmitted by hegoumenos Metodije; it is cited as tagged FID and contains a short passage of praise for Nemanja; he carries gifts	58–60
S5	Simeon (Mt Athos)	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška) 3rd person	Simeon sends a piece of the Holy Cross in response	Metodije transmits the message introduced by “he said:”, he is introduced by a disembodied voice and reworded before returning to Mt Athos	60–62

	SENDER	ADDRESSEE	CONTENT	COMMENT	PAGE
S6	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška) 1st person	Sava (Mt Athos)	Stefan describes the civil war with his brother and asks Sava to bring the relics of Simeon and purify the land	Narrator takes up the 1st person and describes his mental and physical state in the tag	72–74
S7	Sava (Mt Athos)	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška) 1st person	Short confirmation of the request	Stefan "hears the words" of the letter	74–76
S8	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška) 1st person	Michael Doukas – Angel of Epiros	Stefan asks Michael to give him back the city of Skodra and threatens him	"Sending (it) to him, I said:", Stefan addresses Michael as brother; Michael is mysteriously killed	88–89
S9	Andrew II of Hungary	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška) 1st person	Andrew calls Stefan to meet him, after miraculously giving up of the attack on Raška	"...the messengers came saying:", Andrew addresses Stefan as lord and brother	102–103
Letters or messengers mentioned without citing the content					
SII1	Mt Athos	Raška		Messengers sent to find Rastko inform Nemanja that he became a monk on Mt Athos	48
SII2	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška)	Strez (Prosek)		Stefan sends Sava to negotiate with Strez; after negotiations fail, Strez dies	84–86

TABLE 2
LETTERS IN DOMENTIJAN, LIFE OF SAVA

	SENDER	ADDRESSEE	CONTENT	COMMENT	PAGE
D1	Ana & Stefan Nemanja (Raška)	Sava (Mount Athos)	Parents asking Sava to come and see them	"Come" formula	28–30
D2	Sava (Mt Athos)	Stefan Nemanja (Raška)	Sava asking Nemanja to join him on Mount Athos	Entire "chapter", "come" formula, triply embedded direct discourse	42–64
D3	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška)	Sava (Mt Athos)	Stefan describes the war in Raška and asks Sava to bring the relics of Simeon and purify the land	Shorter, less personal and slightly remodelled letter from The Life of Simeon	142
D4	Sava (Mt Athos)	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška)	Sava confirms his coming	More elaborate response than in The Life of Simeon	144
D5	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška)	Sava (Mt Athos)	Stefan informs Sava that myrrh stopped pouring from Simeon's grave and asks him to come	Stefan not named in the tag, but the sender can be deduced from the letter	186–188
D6	Sava (Thessalonike)	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška)	Sava announces his arrival	The purpose of the letter announced in the tag, Sava uses "we" to designate himself, him and his brother and all humankind	212–214
D7	Sava (Hungarian court)	Andrew II of Hungary (Hungarian court)	Sava sends a messenger to ask for ice	Oral message	254
D8	Sava (Hungarian court)	Andrew II of Hungary (Hungarian court)	Sava sends a messenger with the miraculous ice	Oral message	256
D9	?	Sava (On the road to Raška)	Messenger informs Sava of his brother's death	One-sentence oral message	270

	SENDER	ADDRESSEE	CONTENT	COMMENT	PAGE
Letters or messengers mentioned without citing the content of the letter					
DII1	?	Protos of Mt Athos		The Athonite authorities are warned not to keep young Rastko	14
DII2	Hegoumenos of the Vatopedi Monastery (Mt Athos)	Alexios III Angelos (Constantinople)		Sava sent as a messenger of the hegoumenos, all privileges asked in hegoumenos's epistle approved	82
DII3	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška)	Strez (Prosek)		Sava sent to remind Strez of the ties of brotherhood and oaths	172
DII4	Strez (Prosek)	Sava (Prosek)		Messenger sent to fetch Sava, after Strez wakes, stabbed in his sleep	178
DII5	Sava (Mont Athos)	Simeon (Studenica Monastery)		Sava sends a messenger Ilarije to his father, "alive after death", with the instruction how to read his letter	190
DII6	Sava (Raška)	Pope Honorius III (Rome)		Sava sends an epistle to ask for the crown for his brother Stefan	246–248
DII7	Andrew II of Hungary (Hungarian court)	Sava (Hungarian court)		Messenger sent to inform Sava that there is no ice	250
DII8	Stefan the First-Crowned (Raška)	Sava (Mount Athos)		Stefan sends a messenger to tell Sava he is sick and invite him to come	270
DII9	Sava ('Anatolia')	John III Vatatzes		Sava asks John III for the horses to bring him from the shore to the court	304
DII10	Sava ('Kerak')	Al-Malik Al-Kāmil (Cairo)		Sava sends disciples to announce his visit	368

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Domentijan, *Life of Sava*. Eds L J. Juhas-Georgievska and T. Jovanović, Žitije svetoga Save. Belgrade 2001.

——— Ed. Đ. Daničić, *Domentijan, Život svetoga Simeuna i svetoga Save*. Belgrade 1865: http://digitalna.nb.rs/wb/NBS/Stara_i_retka_knjiga/Zbirka_knjiga_Djure_Danicica/S-II-0226#page/0/mode/1up (accessed 18 March 2017).

Poslanica, ed. G. Daničić, 1872. "Poslanica sv. Save arhiepiskopa srpskoga iz Jerusalima u Studenicu igumanu Spiridonu" *Starine* IV, 230–31.

Stefan the First-Crowned, *Life of Simeon*. Eds L. J. Juhas-Georgievska and T. Jovanović, *Stefan Prvovenčani, Sabrana dela*. Belgrade 1999.

Studenica typikon. Ed. T. Jovanović, *Studenički tipik. Carostavnik manastira Studenice.* Belgrade 1994.

Teodosije, *Life of Sava,* Ed. Đ. Daničić, *Domentijan* (sic!)*, Život svetoga Save*. Belgrade 1860: http://digitalna.nb.rs/wb/NBS/Stara_i_retka_knjiga/Zbirka_knjiga_Djure_Danicica/S-II-1272 (accessed 18 March 2017).

Zbornik. Eds V. Mošin, S. Ćirković, D. Sindik, *Zbornik srednjovekovnih ćirilskih povelja i pisama Srbije, Bosne i Dubrovnika, knjiga I, 1186–1321*. Belgrade 2011.

Secondary sources

Alber, J. 2014 [2013]. "Unnatural Narrative", in LHN (accessed 26 April 2016).

Bal, M. 1981. "Notes on narrative embedding" *Poetics Today* 2/2, 41–59.

——— 1997 [1985]. *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative. Second Edition*. Toronto, Buffalo and London.

Blagojević, M. 2011. *Srpska državnost u srednjem veku.* Belgrade.

Bojović, B. 1995. *L'idéologie monarchique dans les hagio-biographies dynastique du moyen âge serbe.* Roma.

——— 2001. "Une monarchie hagiographique. La théologie du pouvoir dans la Serbie médiévale (XIIe-XVe siècles)" in Guran and Flusin (eds) 2001, 61–73.

Burke, J. et al. (eds) 2006. *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*. ByzAus 16, Melbourne.

Cousar, C. B. 1996, *The Letters of Paul*, Nashville, TN.

Ćirković, S. (ed.) 1994. *Istorija srpskog naroda. Prva knjiga – od najstarijih vremena do Maričke bitke (1371).* Belgrade.

——— (ed.) 1998. *Sveti Sava u srpskoj istoriji i tradiciji*. Belgrade.

Đurić, V. (ed.) 1979, *Međunarodni naučni skup Sava Nemanjić – Sveti Sava, istorija i predanje, Decembar 1976*. Belgrade.

Efthymiadis, S. (ed.) 2011. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography Vol. I: Periods and Places*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT.

Fine, J. V. A. Jr. 1991 [1983]. *The Early Medieval Balkans. A Critical Survey from the Sixth to the Late Twelfth Century*. Ann Arbor, MI.

Fludernik, M. 1996. *Towards a 'Natural' Narratology.* London and New York.

Genette, G. 1972. *Figures III*. Paris.

Guran, P. and B. Flusin (eds) 2001. *L'empereur hagiographe. Culte des saints et monarchie byzantine et post-byzantine. Actes des colloques internationaux « L'empereur hagiographe » (13–14 mars 2000) et « Reliques et miracles » (1–2 novembre 2000) tenus au New Europe College*. Bucharest.

Hafner, S. 1964. *Studien zur altserbischen dynastischen Historiographie*. Munich.

Herman, D. 2002. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*. Lincoln, NE and London.

Høgel, C. 2015. "The actual words of Theodore Graptos. A Byzantine saint's letter as inserted document", in Høgel and Bartoli (eds) 2015, 307–15.

Høgel, C. and Bartoli, E. (eds) 2015, *Medieval Letters. Between Fiction and Document.* Turnhout.

Ivić, P. 1979, "O jeziku u spisima svetoga Save" in Đurić (ed.) 1979, 167–75.

Jouanno 2002. *Naissance et métamorphoses du Roman d'Alexandre : domaine grec.* Paris.

Juhas-Georgievska, L. "Dokumentarno i fikcijsko u Domentijanovom delu Život Svetog Save", in Ćirković (ed.) 1998, 141–58.

——— 2003, Život Svetog Save od Domentijana. Istorija teksta. Belgrade.

Kalić, J. 1994a. "Srpski veliki župani u borbi sa Vizantijom", in Ćirković (ed.) 1994, 197–211;

——— 1994b. "Borbe i tekovine velikog župana Stefana Nemanje", in Ćirković (ed.) 1994, 251–62.

Krsmanović, B., L. Maksimović and R. Radić (eds) 2012. *Vizantijski svet na Balkanu II.* Belgrade.

LHN = *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Eds P. Hühn et al. Hamburg 2013 [2009]: http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de.

Lunde, I. 2011. "Slavic hagiography", in Efthymiadis (ed.) 2011, 369–83.

Marinković, R. 1969. *Srpska Aleksandrida. Istorija osnovnog teksta.* Beograd.

Mullett, M. 1997. *Theophylact of Ochrid. Reading the Letters of a Byzantine Archbishop*. BBOS 2, Aldershot, Hants and Brookfield, VT.

Mullett, M. 2006. "Novelisation in Byzantium: narrative after the revival of fiction", in Burke et al. (eds) 2006, 1–28.

Nieragden, G. 2002. "Focalization and narration: theoretical and terminological refinements" *Poetics Today* 23/4, 685–97.

Odorico, P. (ed.) 2012. *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine. Le texte en tant que message immédiat*. Paris.

Papaioannou, S. 2012. "A fragile literature: Byzantine letter-collections and the case of Michael Psellos", in Odorico (ed.) 2012, 289–328.

Protić, P. S. 1897. Žitija srpskih svetaca kao izvor istorijski. Belgrade.

Riehle, A. 2012. "Epistolography as autobiography: remarks on the letter-collections of Nikephoros Choumnos" *Parekbolai* 2, 1–22.

Ryan, M.-L. 2014 [2012]. "Space" in LHN (accessed 26 April 2016).

Špadijer, I. 2010. "Hronološki okviri književnog rada Teodosija Hilandarca" *Prilozi za književnost, jezik, istoriju i folklor* 76, 3–15.

Živković, T. 2012. "O takozvanoj „Hronici srpskih vladara" iz spisa *De administrando imperio* cara Konstantina VII Porfirogenita", in Krsmanović, Maksimović and Radić (eds) 2012, 313–32.

5

IDEOLOGICAL STORYWORLDS IN BYZANTIUM AND ARMENIA: HISTORIOGRAPHY AND MODEL SELVES IN NARRATIVES OF INSURRECTION

AnnaLinden Weller

Authors in the tenth- and eleventh-century Byzantine world engaged in narrative worldmaking when they wrote historiography. Byzantine – and Armenian, Syriac, Georgian, etc. – authors, in the composition of historiographic texts, formulate, through an assembly of referents commonly shared between author and audience, a world which is bound by collectively agreed-upon rules of causality and verisimilitude, and populated by recognizable character types. The rules of this created world are sometimes uncomfortably apparent to modern readers. We, like Byzantine persons, are perfectly capable of recognizing tropic characters and events – the good emperor, blessed with philanthropy and right judgment; the defeat of the venial barbarian in battle – but when we recognize their repetitive nature in the context of encountering them in a history (a text often given authoritative weight by its author's declaration of his own true eyewitness accounting), we tend to dismiss the history as biased, ideological, untrue – lacking in 'verisimilitude', not quite history.

However, these repetitions and tropes are not only useful to tenth- and eleventh-century historiographers, but appear to be essential to the process of narrative worldmaking which underpins their historiographies. The presence of distinct character types in historiography is employed consistently throughout the entire corpus of Byzantine historical writing, and was central to the process of bringing past events to the beneficial memory and awareness of present persons.[1] Furthermore, tropic events and standard character types have a tendency to traverse linguistic boundaries: the highly *narrative* account of an event easily jumps from a Greek-language history to an Armenian-language one, or vice versa. Narrativized descriptions of history flex easily: a trope or mod-

[1] As demonstrated by John of Damascus's suggestion that images (*eikones*), i.e. *narratives of exemplary men* (especially saints), brought "past events to memory (*mnēmē*)". See Papaioannou 2014, and John of Damascus, *Orationes de imaginibus tres* 3.23.

el, sans detail, is more easily imported from one culture-complex to another than a fully detailed account reliant on local context.

In this article I shall present a narratological model, using the concept of the 'storyworld' as developed by David Herman, which accounts for the usefulness of tropic characters in Byzantine historiographical work, and then suggest how that model also can show an influence between Byzantine and non-Byzantine historiographies which is both subtler and more pervasive than strict intertextuality. Specifically, in considering the narratives surrounding the Xiphias-Phokas revolt of 1022 CE in both Greek and Armenian sources as a reflection of not only 'events on the ground' but also employment of tropic characters and subjects which create normalizing, locally-relevant understandings. Since the Xiphias-Phokas revolt is an account of an event which 'really happened' quite often in the middle Byzantine period – the attempted or successful usurpation of the imperial throne, often by a man at the head of an army with an Eastern Anatolian political base – and also contains many examples of tropic persons, events, and portrayals, it is a useful case study which displays how tropic narratives about insurrection can move across cultural boundaries in Eastern Anatolia.

CAN WE TALK ABOUT CHARACTERIZATION IN HISTORY?

Histories are, after all, accounts of 'real' events – and all the characters which appear within them can be mapped to 'real' persons. However, both Jakov Ljubarskij and Ruth Macrides have pointed out in substantial detail that "the narrative structures used by historians were not chosen by the authors at random, but in order to realise their ideological and literary intentions in the text",[2] and recent scholarship on the historiographic work produced in the middle Byzantine period has not ignored this. Examinations of the oeuvres of Michael Psellos, Anna Komnene, Nikephoros Bryennios, Leo the Deacon, John Skylitzes, etc. have pointed out – to varying degrees – the 'presence' of the author by noticing where he makes visible literary *choices* in the construction of his account of history.[3] These choices derive from both the author's personal circumstances and from the tradition of authorial presence in historiography which originated in Herodotus and Thucydides.[4] Byzantine authors, educated in the classical rhetorical tradition, were entirely aware of the uses of *plasma* – 'fictionality' or 'change' – in

[2] Ljubarskij 1998, 15.

[3] See i.e. Papaioannou 2013 (on Psellos), Neville 2016 (on Anna Komnene), Neville 2012 (on Bryennios), Talbot and Sullivan 2005 (on Leo the Deacon), and Holmes 2006 (on Skylitzes), amongst others.

[4] See Macrides 1996 and 2010, as well as Smythe 2013.

historiographic narrative,[5] and as early as the *Chronicle* of Theophanes were employing 'fictionalized' or 'novelized' strategies of managing historical narratives and the characters[6] – particularly emperors and other powerful men – who appear within them. As "Byzantine systems of reading and rhetorical performance were strategically open to manipulation so as to fit a variety of contexts, audiences, and arguments",[7] the 'rhetor' – the constructed self which wrote – was able to use techniques specific to classicizing Byzantine high culture to produce effects which were both literary and self-promoting; that placed the rhetor in a position to declare his cultural competence and make use of it.

At this stage in thinking about Byzantine historiography we should assume that the hand of the historian-author is visible in the produced text. The question is, rather, in what ways does this 'ideological and literary intention' show up in the portrayal of persons? What about the construction of a character in a history is *mimetic* – representative of the 'actual' historical record of this person's activity – and what *synthetic,* created or emphasized to further the authorial goals for the narrative?

Historiographical production in the Byzantine tenth and eleventh centuries shows a general trend toward focusing the narrative of events through a "prominent personality" – whether this is the soldier-emperors Nikephoros I Phokas and John Tzimiskes in Leo the Deacon or the nearly-hagiographic focus on the person of the emperor in the *Life of Basil I*.[8] The use of a persona as a lens for composing and arranging historiographical narrative is part of the collapse of the 'history' and the 'chronicle' (as disambiguated by modern historians) which was occurring in the tenth and eleventh centuries. It is also entirely in line both with the ancient tradition of locating historiographical narrative in *enkōmia* and biography – which tenth-century Byzantines were entirely aware of, considering their frequent employment of the *topos* of distinguishing what they were doing in *historiai* from what they were doing in *enkōmia,*[9] a distinction which would not have been so frequent if it was not necessary – and the Byzantine habit of localizing historical memory and ideal models in the lives of exemplary men and women, i.e. saints.[10]

Training in the rhetorical presentation of model selves began with the *progymnasmata* – schoolroom exercises which gave a Byzantine author access to the full toolkit of models, tropes, and styles which were necessary components of public self-assembly as

[5] Agapitos 2012; see also Markopoulos 2009.
[6] Nilsson 2006, 50.
[7] Papaioannou 2013, 55.
[8] Markopoulos 2009, 702–3. See also Messis in this volume.
[9] Ljubarskij 1998, 12.
[10] Papaioannou 2014, 298–99.

well as any literary accomplishment. *Typoi*, in particular, were learned through writing *ēthopoiia*: an exercise which required the author to re-create, in dramatic monologue, the thoughts and feelings of a historical or mythological figure at a critical point.[11] An *ēthopoiia* was defined in the rhetorical manuals as an "imitation of an underlying person" (μίμησις ἤθους ὑποκειμένου προσώπου).[12] In imitating this person, the student of rhetoric imagined themselves to *be* someone else, and obtained rhetorical skill in imitating a 'character'; a fictional ideal other.[13] Mimicry was an essential part of creating a character; the skill of imitation, first learned in *ēthopoiia*, allowed also for the Byzantine author to assemble 'himself' – and other 'real' persons – in imitation of ideal models. These ideal models come from a variety of locations: biblical texts, classical mythology and philosophy, *enkōmia* of emperors and other officials, etc.

It seems clear that character is, at least in the historiographic production of the tenth and eleventh centuries in Byzantium, a site which authors found useful for creating narratives which commented on their contemporary situations and presented a specific vision of the past. While *ēthopoiia* as a specific rhetorical practice does not always visibly appear in historiographies, the training in writing *ēthopoiia* which underlies historiographical production by Byzantine authors shapes the use of and significance attached to tropic representations. *Presentation* of character in historiography is explicitly tied to ideal or 'model' persons, and the ways in which 'real' persons do or do not correspond to these models. In this sense we can think of a synthetic element in the creation of character in historiography, *even if* these characters represent real persons.

STORYWORLDS AND STORYWORLD THINKING

The concept of 'storyworld', created by the cognitive narratologist David Herman and widely used in postclassical narratology across disciplines, is both intuitively simple and has deep consequences for thinking about how people engage with narrative frameworks like those found in historiographies. A 'storyworld' can be defined as a possible world constructed by, not only the narrative on the page, but the cognitive results of the process of comprehending the story, cued by the author and experienced and completed by the reader.[14] It is bigger than any one narrative. It is a sort of 'mental model' of a universe, containing all of the events, persons, places, and interactions that make up the narrative, *plus* all of the possible events, persons, places, and interactions

[11] Kustas 1973, 45–46.

[12] Aphthonios, *Progymnasmata* 1–2 and 34; also John of Sardis, *Commentary on Aphthonios's Progymnasmata* 15.11–17.13.

[13] Bloomer 1997.

[14] Herman 2002, 55. See also Vukašinović in this volume.

which might exist in a world where the narrative-as-perceived also exists.[15] A storyworld is thus a co-created world bound by rules of causality and verisimilitude which are collectively held in common – an assembly of referents. In Byzantine texts, most of these rules are taught to authors and readers through the *progymnasmata,* rhetorical exercises, in the schoolroom, as well as the collective culture's story production (i.e. biblical models, classical mythology, widely-read schoolroom texts or literature which is popular at court). The success of a Byzantine author is in many ways limited by his ability to convey accurately his understanding of those rules, and to present both his characters and his own constructed self in a way which makes them recognizable to an audience who are also steeped in that understanding. A character thus constructed follows a pattern which is a recognizable-definable *model person*; such model persons circulate in the collective culture[16] (or at least in the collective subculture of Constantinopolitan-educated Byzantine intellectuals, which is the subculture we, as readers of Byzantine literature, have access to) – and can be expected to respond in predictable ways to narrative situations.

Access to the storyworld takes place in the mind of the reader or perceiver of the narrative. It is no surprise that 'storyworlds' and possible-worlds theory have been mostly used by cognitive narratologists – they ask us to think of the act of reading/perceiving/interpreting narrative as something which occurs within the mind. We can think of this process of access to the storyworld as having three elements, which the theorist Alan Palmer has defined as "the source domain" – the world the reader lives in, where the narrative is being processed by the reader's mind – "the target domain" – the storyworld – and the "system of textual features that triggers various kinds of reader-held real-world knowledge that projects the reader from the source domain to the target domain".[17] This is where the deep consequences of the storyworld concept begin to emerge: storyworld thinking treats narrative as a *process* which moves the mind of the reader from the world they live in, with its perceivable rules, to the storyworld, which has *different* perceivable rules.

Cognitively, the reader/perceiver has a set of shared communal knowledge – Doležel's *encyclopedia* – which they use to comprehend the text. This encyclopedia "varies with cultures, social groups, [and] historical epochs"[18] – the shared communal knowledge of a tenth-century Byzantine intellectual is clearly not the same as that of a twenty-first-century Byzantinist, let alone a twenty-first-century Middle American teenager – but it also varies between the source domain and the target domain. We can

[15] Herman 2009, 72–73.
[16] Herman 2002, 127.
[17] Palmer 2004, 34.
[18] Doležel 1998, 177.

think of the reader/perceiver's knowledge about the storyworld as the *fictional encyclopedia*, and in order to "reconstruct and interpret" a narrative, the reader/perceiver must "reorient his cognitive stance to agree with the [story]world's encyclopedia".[19] Storyworlds are, therefore, not confined to genres that we traditionally consider 'fiction'. A storyworld can also be ideological: "stories construed as strategies for building mental models of the world"[20] applies just as well to conceptions of 'how a state functions' as it does to 'what is a plausible event in a novel'. A person can reorient his or her cognitive stance to match an ideological narrative interpretation of historical events just as well as he or she can do so to interpret the narrative of a novel or a saint's *Life*.

We can in fact imagine all of Byzantine society as a storyworld: a collection of these idealized model persons, these *typoi:* independent from any particular composition but collectively conceived of in the minds of the literati of Constantinople. The construction of the Byzantine authorial self in *mimēsis* of these typoi-persons – sharing, in some sense, the *ēthos* of the ideal model – allows for the author to participate in the collective *societal* storyworld. We could call the Byzantine societal storyworld an 'ideological storyworld': an 'encyclopedia' which functions as an overlay of implied meaning on top of the 'real', perceivable world. It is a fiction-internal universe, whose rules are described by Byzantine self-conception and imperial presentation; it is composed of ideal persons; and within it, ideology *describes accurately* motivations and events. Ideology here has causal force – in contrast to the 'real' universe where people (not 'characters') and systems (not 'ideologies') behave in ways which can be quite independent from any expected set of storyworld rules.

This conception of the ideological storyworld clearly has implications for how we read tropic events in Byzantine historiographical accounts, and can help interpret the construction of the narrative of the Xiphias-Phokas revolt in both Greek and Armenian sources.

THE XIPHIAS-PHOKAS REVOLT

In the year 1021 CE, near the end of his reign, the emperor Basil II again faced a revolt in Cappadocia led by men who had once been important and loyal members of his own imperial administration: Nikephoros Xiphias, once the hero of Basil's Bulgarian campaigns and now the *stratēgikon* of the Anatolian theme, and Nikephoros Phokas, the son of the rebel Bardas Phokas, known as "the Twisted Neck". Accounts of this revolt appear in eleventh-century sources in all the major languages of Eastern Anatolia:

[19] Doležel 1998, 181.
[20] Herman 2002, 2.

Greek (Skylitzes, Kedrenos, and Zonaras), Armenian (Aristakes Lastivertc'i and Matthew of Edessa), Arabic (Yahya ibn Said), and Georgian (the Georgian Royal Annals.) Yet, in the narrative of Basil II's reign which has been promulgated most often by modern historiographers, this late-stage revolt receives little or no attention.[21] Nevertheless, this insurrection is one of the few events in the early eleventh century which appears in both Greek and non-Greek chronicle sources equally. Thus, it provides a useful window onto the representation in historiography of a globally significant moment of attempted usurpation: particularly when considered in light of narratives of legitimacy and tropic model persons. In the 1020s Basil II was growing old; he had no clearly designated male heir. The historiographic narratives which surround the Xiphias-Phokas revolt therefore necessarily grapple with uncertain imperial transition and the ideal image of an emperor.[22]

Furthermore, this engagement with uncertainty, insurrection, and legitimacy is not reserved for the Byzantine sources, but forms a crucial element in the Armenian, Arabic, and Georgian accounts. For reasons of space, this essay will deal primarily with Skylitzes, as a representative of the Byzantine chronicle tradition, and several Armenian chronicle-like sources, as a point of comparison – primarily Aristakes Lastivertc'i's *History Concerning Events Occasioned by Foreign Races Living Around Us*. The *History* is the only extant Armenian historiographical work of the eleventh century, and the only eye-witness text to the Seljuq invasions. It is transmitted in twenty-seven manuscripts, indicating that it was widely read, and seems to have circulated from an early date alongside Step'anos of Tarōn's *Universal Chronicle*.[23] Notwithstanding its historical importance, however, the *History* is not an overly long work, running to 101 pages in its modern edition. It unevenly covers the years 1000–1071 – jumping over events and returning to them as most pleased the project of its author.

A brief summary of the events of this revolt, to orient us: this narrative is my own compilation from *all* the extant sources mentioned above and is not entirely found in any of them individually. Xiphias and Phokas sought to unseat Basil II while he was on campaign in Iberia against the Georgian king Giorgi of Ap'xazet'i. Basil had commenced his Iberian campaign – the second of his reign – in 1020 CE, after Giorgi refused to recognize the Byzantine claim on the possessions of the *previous* Georgian

[21] See Holmes 2006 for a discussion of how this revolt has been overlooked by modern historiography in favour of preserving the narrative created in Psellos's *Chronographia*, where it does not appear at all – Psellos having eliminated it in order to preserve his narrative arc of Basil II's reign, in which Basil emerged victorious from his troubles with insurrection in the East after the defeat of Bardas Phokas and Bardas Skleros.

[22] Holmes 2006, 32–35.

[23] Thomson 2003, 73–88.

monarch, Davit' of Tao.[24] It is thus necessary to consider the Xiphias-Phokas revolt in the context of the much better-known rebellions of Basil II's reign: namely the revolts of Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas in the late tenth century. The two periods of rebellion are doubly linked: despite being separated by thirty-odd years (and all of Basil II's successes in Bulgaria), they both involve members of the Phokas family, and they both concern the fate of the Georgian principality. In 987, Bardas Phokas had allied with Davit', who provided many of the troops which he used to rebel against Basil II's authority; however, once that revolt had been subdued, Davit' was compelled to promise in his will that all his lands, including the city of Theodosioupolis, would devolve to Byzantine control upon his death.[25] But Davit' died ca. 1001, and in the following fifteen years, King Giorgi of Ap'xazet'i refused to recognize the Byzantine claim – and it was for this reason that Basil II was on campaign in Iberia in 1020 CE.

The initial reasons for the insurrection which Xiphias and Phokas spearheaded vary between the sources, but both the primary Armenian account (Lastivertc'i) and the primary Greek account (Skylitzes/Zonaras) suggest that the landholding aristocrats of eastern Asia Minor felt neglected and abandoned by Basil II – he had not included them in his Georgian campaign and had disadvantaged them materially after the defeat of the previous Phokas-led revolt in 987.[26] Stephen Rapp has suggested that it is possible that King Giorgi helped to instigate the uprising, believing that it would disadvantage Basil II, though he is careful to note that there is no direct evidence of this, only statements in Matthew of Edessa and Skylitzes/Kedrenos that contact was established between the rebels and the Georgian king.[27] Nevertheless, some Georgians were certainly involved in the rebellion – the Georgian, Armenian, and Greek sources all speak of a person called P'erisi "of the race of Tao" who was embroiled in the revolt. The idea may have been to restore the traditional links between the house of Phokas and the Georgians.[28]

The revolt did not last long. It was put down within the year. Lastivertc'i writes that it "was not prolonged, but was rather like a structure built on sand and that quickly falls into ruin from the blows of a flood".[29] Xiphias and Phokas quarrelled; Phokas was murdered, possibly on Xiphias's orders, and (at least in the Armenian sources) his decapitated head was displayed to Basil's troops; Xiphias was confined to a monastery

[24] John Skylitzes, *Synopsis* 366–67, Yahya ibn Sa'id, *History*, PO 47, 463–67.
[25] Rapp 2003, 414–15.
[26] Cheynet 2003, 93.
[27] Rapp 2003, 415.
[28] Cheynet 2003, 101.
[29] Lastivertc'i, *Recit des malheurs* 3.17.

near Constantinople;[30] and Basil II resumed his Georgian campaign without further distraction.

Having given this account, I am now going to present a problem with it, and then suggest a solution which, instead of focusing on untangling what 'really happened', uses storyworld thinking to consider how each of the sources chooses to present the revolt's main players. Here is the interesting problem with the account of the revolt which I have assembled: Nikephoros Xiphias has disappeared from the major Armenian source, Aristakes Lastivertc'i's *History*, entirely. He has been replaced, in whole cloth – his role, ironically, usurped – by an Armenian named David Senek'erim of Vaspurakan, who is identified as a Byzantine vassal of Armenian origin and connections.[31] This person did exist – he is not entirely a figment of Lastivertc'i's imagination – we can identify him with the eldest son of Senek'erim-Hovhannes, the Artsruni king of Vaspurakan, who traded Vaspurakan to Basil II in the early 1020s in exchange for lands in central Anatolia.[32] David, his father, and Xiphias all seem to have become intertwined in the narrative of the Xiphias-Phokas revolt as told by the Armenian sources.

In Lastivertc'i, this Senek'erim first goes over to the rebels and then regains his loyalty to Basil, "as if waking from a drunken stupor"[33] – then proceeds to kill Phokas, and brings his head to Basil. Basil then displays it to his troops as a propaganda warning. In Matthew of Edessa, who makes substantial use of Lastivertc'i, David appears again instead of Xiphias, and his motivations are both chronologically and logically confused: 'David' goes over to Phokas because Phokas promises him the Armenian kingdom, but David does not want to betray Basil, so he kills Phokas and the rebellion dissolves. He slips between loyalty and disloyalty in a few lines:

> [...] the magnate David went over to him with the Armenian forces, and thus Basil was greatly alarmed. The emperor sent supplications to David so that he [Basil] might extricate himself from this dangerous situation. However, Crookneck [Nikephoros Phokas] had a great liking for David and promised to install him on the throne of the Armenian kingdom, but David did not wish to break the pact he had with Basil [...].[34]

This rapid switch seems to be a result of how David is a collapsed version of himself, an actual 'verifiable' Armenian aristocrat, and Xiphias.

As a reward for killing Nikephoros Phokas, David receives Caesarea, Camndaw, and Khawatanek districts from Basil as gifts. This is entirely *not* what happened to Xiphias according to Skylitzes, who spends a great deal of time explaining how, in the aftermath

[30] John Skylitzes, *Synopsis* 367.
[31] Holmes 2006, 483–84. See also *PmbZ,* Senek'erim-Yovhannēs Arcruni (#27008).
[32] Garsoïan 1997, 189–90.
[33] Lastivertc'i, *Recit des malheurs* 3.17.
[34] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle* 47.

of the collapsing revolt, Xiphias was exiled to a monastery. It is perhaps easiest to see these competing narratives in a table:

	Xiphias	**David Senek'erim**
Sources	Greek: Skylitzes, Zonaras Georgian: Georgian Royal Annals Arabic: Yahya ibn Sa'id	Armenian: Lastivertc'i, Matthew of Edessa, Armenian recension of Georgian Royal Annals
During the rebellion	persuaded to join the rebellion by local (Byzantine?) Anatolian nobility	Persuaded to join the rebellion by local Georgian nobility, and promised the Armenian throne
End of the rebellion	kills Nikephoros Phokas, ending the revolt	kills Nikephoros Phokas, ending the revolt
Eventual fate	exiled to a monastery by Basil II	Receives Caesarea, Camndaw, and Khawatanek districts from Basil II as a reward

Why has this collapse of persons occurred? If we think of the storyworld of Byzantine ideology, and the subset of that societal storyworld which is the world-internal logic of each individual historiography, we can think about how the portrayals of Xiphias, Phokas, and this David Senek'erim fit or do not fit into appropriate 'model persons', and how this fit or lack thereof reveals the anxieties around legacy, succession, and legitimacy which existed at the close of Basil II's reign, for both Byzantine and non-Byzantine writers of historiography – and explain, perhaps, where Xiphias has gone off to in the Armenian sources. Storyworld thinking will allow us to see how the narrative shape of the 'usurper' and the 'ideal civil servant' move from a Byzantine milieu into an Armenian one. The same events and narrative structures are interpreted by different groups of people using different 'fictional encyclopedias' and storyworld rules. They are thus useful to the individual projects of historiographical authors. As stories are "strategies for building mental models of the world",[35] the differences between the Armenian and the Byzantine storyworlds are significant for thinking about differences between the Armenian and Byzantine interpretations of the end of Basil II's reign and questions of political legitimacy in the face of usurpation.

In both the Byzantine and Armenian accounts of the Xiphias-Phokas revolt, legitimacy – the right to imperial control – is an inherent quality of the persons who hold it. That is, in both the Byzantine ideological storyworld and the Armenian ideological storyworld, the narrative shape of a legitimate emperor is delineated by inherent and

[35] Herman 2002, 35.

visibly demonstrated qualities which can be observed in narrative form. Retaining rulership and being capable of putting down revolts are part of the nature of 'good' emperors – i.e. success is a quality which differentiates a legitimate ruler from an illegitimate usurper. The model person of the 'legitimate ruler' is capable of retaining rulership. It is the emperor's correct *qualities while being a ruler*, not any inborn factor, which make him an appropriate emperor.[36]

In the Byzantine ideological storyworld, this conception of legitimacy evolved in part from the representation of rulers in panegyric and philosophical literature in late antiquity and the classical period, texts which were part of the education of Byzantine literati – i.e. texts which help to constitute the 'encyclopedia' of rules that make up the Byzantine storyworld. A brief but instructive example is John Lydus's *On Powers*, which can be read as a methodology for judging an emperor's personal and political qualities against the ideal image of a ruler.[37] The qualities ascribed to the emperor in this ideal image include vigilant care for territory and subjects, obedience to the laws of the *res publica,* philanthropy and clemency, etc. The *On Powers,* like many other late antique and Byzantine texts on kingship (including Theophylact of Ochrid's laudatory address to Constantine Doukas and Leo VI's funeral oration for Basil I), highlights especially the "sleepless care" that a monarch needs to preserve and maintain the order of the realm.[38] Sleeplessness, constant toil, and the practice of clemency and obedience to the *res publica* are all ways which the model 'good emperor' acts in the ideological storyworld of Byzantium. This image of ideal rulership is visible in fiction as well as in historiography: in *Digenis Akritis*, the eponymous epic hero advises the emperor:

> To love the subjects, pity the poor,
> To deliver those treated unjustly and oppressed,
> To grant forgiveness to those who faulted mindlessly,
> To pay no heed to slanders, accept no injustice,
> To drive away heretics, strengthen the orthodox.
> For these, O master, are the weapons of justice,
> With which you can overcome all your enemies,
> As to dominate and rule is not of might,
> But solely a gift from God and the right hand of the Highest One.[39]

Here are the storyworld-rules of ideal emperorship in Byzantium laid out quite plainly – and most of these ideal markers are oriented around the emperor's service to the

[36] Dmitriev 2015, 14.
[37] Dmitriev 2015, 2.
[38] Theophylact of Ochrid, *Or.*4, 207.78 Gautier; [Constantine VII,] *Life of Basil I*, 30 Ševčenko; see also Croke 2011.
[39] *Digenis Akritis*, IV 1033–44.

imperium. That these markers are clearly stated in fiction should not blind us to their presence in historiography – on the contrary, their appearance in a popular epic suggests their pervasiveness in the Byzantine ideological storyworld.

In the narrative of the Xiphias-Phokas revolt as compiled by Skylitzes, the insurrection is sparked by Basil II's failure to possess these qualities in the eyes of the nobles of Cappadocia. They are not included in his Georgian campaign; being slighted, they break into insurrection with other local magnates. Then, Basil II apparently defuses the insurrection via diplomatic clemency, sending letters to both Xiphias and Phokas which are meant to remind them of their loyalties. Xiphias is persuaded, Phokas is not – and then Xiphias arranges for Phokas's death, thus shattering the incipient revolt.

> The emperor wrote and sent letters to both Xiphias and Phokas, with orders to the messenger to take every care to ensure that he deliver each letter to each recipient without the other being aware of it. He did as he was commanded; when he had discreetly delivered the letters, Phokas immediately read his to Xiphias, but Xiphias hid his letter and denied ever having received a word. Then one day he invited the other [Phokas] to confer with him and when he came, had him put to death [...].[40]

Throughout the account, Basil II's ability to adequately govern and retain power is demonstrated through his management (or lack thereof) of his subordinates – in accordance with the ideal image of the emperor, whose sleepless attention toward his subjects and good management of his subordinates demonstrates his true legitimacy.

In the Armenian sources, by contrast, legitimacy is conferred upon Basil II at least in part by a sort of *divine favour*; a providential emperor-ness which has accrued around him. Basil seems to possess this quality *whether or not the Armenian accounts* are favourably disposed towards Byzantium; it is an explanation for the fact that the Xiphias-Phokas revolt fails. *Since* the revolt failed, *therefore* Basil II possessed divine favour. Lastivertc'i writes, "I do not know whether this is a divine law – that servants must not arise against their lords – or whether the emperor then [Basil II] had some special goodness. But I do know for sure, and saw with my own eyes, that those who arose against him died laughable deaths. The same sort of affair had transpired at the beginning of his reign [...]"[41] – referring of course to the previous revolts of Bardas Skleros and Bardas Phokas. Similarly, the Armenian recension of the Georgian Royal Annals informs the reader that Xiphias is slain by Phokas because God respects Basil II: "Basil was greatly troubled over this [revolt]. However, God respected him [Basil], and thus K'sip'e [Xiphias] slew Carvezi [Crookneck/N. Phokas]. Then those who had joined them disbanded [...]".[42] Similarly, in Matthew of Edessa, the entire episode recounting the revolt is framed by

[40] John Skylitzes, Synopsis 366–67.
[41] Aristakes Lastivertc'i, *Récit des malheurs* 3.17–18.
[42] The Book of K'art'li 287.

a (fictitious) account of Basil II's baptism into the Armenian Apostolic Church, conferring upon him divine legitimacy which then allows him to survive the insurrection unscathed.[43]

We can also see, in both the Byzantine and Armenian accounts, that legitimacy can be *un*-conferred: and this delegitimization (in this case, on the part of Xiphias and Phokas, attempting and then failing to assume control over the empire) is demonstrated through oathbreaking and betrayal.[44] In Skylitzes, it is because Phokas disregards the instructions he has received from Basil II, sharing his letter with Xiphias – and thus committing an act of betrayal on top of the betrayal which is insurrection – that Xiphias determines that he will kill him, thus ending the revolt. The Georgian Annals are even more explicit: Xiphias's eventual fate (tonsuring and exile) is a result of his *betrayal of Phokas* – because he betrays his comrade-in-rebellion, he too is doomed: "But K'sip'e was compensated for his treachery to Carvezi: for the Dalassanites [Armenians] enticed him to their fortress in order to avenge the son of Phokas. They captured him and brought him to king Basil, and he exiled him to a certain island [...]".[45]

Lastivertc'i gives us the principle straight-out when he writes that it may be a *divine law* that servants not rebel against their lords. This sort of betrayal of the relationship between subordinate and emperor seems to be part of the functioning of the storyworld, and therefore it is worth considering whether or not we can come up with a version of the 'ideal administrator' to match the version of the 'ideal emperor' found in panegyric, philosophy and epic.

Is there a model person in the Byzantine storyworld of an ideal administrator which is visible in the Byzantine historiography? We can find one in Skylitzes – or at least we can find the traces of one, the shaping of the narrative around the model person of an ideal administrator. Catherine Holmes presents convincing evidence that Skylitzes has arranged his account of Basil II's reign in such a way as to thematically emphasize the loyalties and disloyalties of various high-level agents of the Byzantine state, rather than sticking to a strict chronological account of events. This is perhaps most striking in chapter 25, a quite brief description of the disloyalty or defection of a number of leading Byzantine political figures during Basil II's wars with Samuel of Bulgaria[46] – a substantial amount of chronological time is thematically collapsed here, and the focus shifts from chronotope – the description of events in time/space – to character-

[43] Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle* 48–50.

[44] The question of causality – whether it is the oathbreaking which creates delegitimization or the inherent lack of legitimacy which necessitates oathbreaking – is both intriguing and beyond the scope of this contribution.

[45] The Book of K'art'li 287.

[46] Holmes 2006, 107–9.

ization: the narrative bends around the nature of poor and excellent servants of the empire. Chapter 25 is not the only place this occurs: throughout his account of Basil II's reign, major events are narrated through descriptions of great or perfidious deeds of Byzantine administrators.[47] Thus Skylitzes' focus on demonstrating legitimacy and illegitimacy through the persons of these administrators in his account of the Xiphias-Phokas revolt fits directly with the tenth- to eleventh-century habit of writing historiography through 'prominent personalities', as well as revealing the Byzantine concern with the fate of the empire after the end of Basil's long reign.

Why, then, might there be this collapse between Xiphias – who up until the point of his insurrection has been a model administrator throughout all of his appearances in Skylitzes, having great success on campaign in Bulgaria and receiving the rewards of his loyalty, generosity, and good management – i.e. estates and power in the East – with David Senek'erim? I would like here to suggest that what is going on in the Armenian versions is a kind of hyper-localization conducted through the medium of *cooption of the storyworld rules.* The role of Xiphias – the loyal administrator who is tempted, recants, and is in some sense redeemed – is preserved for David Senek'erim, but in an Armenian mode. David is an aristocrat from Vaspurakan, who has recently – "within the past two or three years", according to Lastivertc'i – traded his patrimony to Byzantium, and received in exchange lands in Sebasteia. He falls in with the rebels, but then recants, "as if recovering from a drunken stupor". He enacts the entire role which has been given to Xiphias in Skylitzes – but he does it in a particularly Armenian mode. Lastivertc'i provides his initial motivation for rebellion: the very fact that harassment by the Seljuqs has forced him into giving up his patrimony.

'SELECTIVE' HISTORIES AND MOVEABLE NARRATIVES ACROSS CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

The cooption of a (Byzantine) character type is in fact characteristic of the hyper-local quality of Armenian chronicle writing, which, even when it fixates on the actions of Byzantine or Seljuq persons, is entirely focused on their impingements on Armenian space. The questions of legitimate rule, fear of uncertain futures, and use of stock character 'model persons' reoccurs – but in an Armenian mode. Armenian historiography throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries contains a remarkable number of Byzantine – and Caliphal and Turkic – persons and locations, as compared to the historiog-

[47] I.e. the defence of Nicaea by Manuel Erotikos during the first Skleros revolt (323) and Ouranos's victory over Samuel at the Spercheios river in 977, amongst others. See Holmes 2006, 110, and Shepard 1976.

raphies produced within Byzantium or the Caliphate.[48] However, these persons and locations are consistently cross-referenced to local, Armenian-centric interpretations. The storyworld rules by which Armenian historiographers shaped their work was not closed or isolated by linguistic boundaries; it was deeply interpenetrated with the activities of the polities which surrounded Armenia.

When Lastivertc'i, in composing his account of the revolt which took place in 1022, replaces Nikephoros Xiphias with David Senek'erim while maintaining the presence and narrative usefulness of the model person whose role both Xiphias and Senek'erim occupy, he is engaged in producing a 'selective' historiography – one in which particular events and persons are recognized as important and placed centrally in the narrative schema, while others are discarded or replaced. This view of Lastivertc'i's *process* centres narrative as the "generative structure of history" which is a "real-life, omnipresent mode of understanding, structuring, interpreting, and transmitting real or imagined experience, knowledge, ideas, and intentions".[49] The storyworld which is being constructed in Lastivertc'i and the storyworld which is being constructed in Skylitzes have slightly different rules of interpretation; the same events appear in each with new and particular emphasis, in order to serve the ideological frameworks to which each historiographer was attempting to communicate.

This model of interpreting tenth- and eleventh-century historiography – centring the storyworld as the primary frame of analysis – enables us to consider ways other than strict intertextuality (i.e. evidence of the use of one text in the composition of another) by which narratives can move across cultural boundaries. The Armenian-language accounts of the Xiphias-Phokas revolt do not share a textual basis with the Greek-language ones. However, they share a narrative structure, and that narrative structure requires the presence of particular model persons. The differing storyworlds of Byzantine and Armenian historiography – and of Byzantine and Armenian society – in the eleventh century require that the narrative space held by those model persons be filled *differently*: in Skylitzes, Xiphias fills the role of the betraying and then redeemed Byzantine administrator, and is an example of framing a historical event through the successes and failures of administrators; in Lastivertc'i, Senek'erim is the one doing the betraying and redemptive actions, but he does so for the particularly Armenian reasons of maintaining and negotiating Armenian sovereignty.

48 Arutjunova-Fidanjan 1996, 14.
49 Fulda 2014, 13.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Aphthonios, *Progymnasmata*. Ed.tr. G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Atlanta 2003, 89–124, ch. 3.

Aristakes Lastivertc'i, *Patmutʿiwn Aristakisi Lastivertcʿwoy*. Ed. K. N. Yuzbašyan. Yerevan: Haykakan SSR Gitutʿiunneri Akademiayi Hratarakčʿutʿyun 1963. Tr. M. Canard and H. Berbérian (French), *Récit des malheurs de la nation arménienne*. Brussels 1973.

The Book of K'art'li (Georgian Royal Annals). Tr. R. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History: The Georgian Chronicles*. Oxford, 1996.

[Constantine VII,] *Life of Basil* I, 30, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii imperatoris amplectitur*. Ed. I. Ševčenko. CFHB 42, Berlin and New York 2011.

Digenis Akritis, *Digenis Akritis: the Grottaferatta and Escorial Versions*. Ed. E. Jeffreys. Cambridge 1998.

John of Sardis, *Commentary on Aphthonios' Progymnasmata*. Ed. tr. G. A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Atlanta 2003, 175–228.

John of Damascus, *Orationes de imaginibus tres*. Ed. B. Kotter. PTS 17, Berlin and New York 1975.

Matthew of Edessa, *Chronicle*. Tr. A. E. Dostourian, *Armenia and the Crusades in the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*. Lanham and London 1993.

Skylitzes, John, *Synopsis*. Ed. I. Thurn, *Ioannis Skylitzae Synopsis Historiarum*. CFHB 5. Berlin, 1973. Tr. John Wortley, *A Synopsis of Byzantine History 811–1057*. Cambridge 2010.

Theophylact of Ochrid, or. 4, to Constantine Doukas. Tr. and comm. P. Gautier, *Théophylacte d'Achrida, Discours, traités, poésie*, vol. 1, CFHB 16/1, Thessalonike 1980, 207.78.

Yaḥyā ibn Saʿīd al-Antaki, *History*, part 3. Ed. I. U. Krachkovskii, tr. F. Micheau and G. Troupeau, *Histoire de Yahya Ibn Said d'Antioche*. PO 47, Turnhout, 1997.

Secondary sources

Agapitos, P. A. 2012. "In Rhomaian, Frankish and Persian lands: fiction and fictionality in Byzantium," in L. Mortensen and P. A. Agapitos (eds), *Medieval Narratives between History and Fiction: From the Centre to the Periphery of Europe, 1100–1400*. Copenhagen, 235–367.

Arutjunova-Fidanjan, V. 1996. "L'image de l'empire byzantin dans l'historiographie armenienne medievale (Xe-XIe s.)", in *L'Arménie et Byzance: histoire et culture*. Paris, 7–17.

Bloomer, W. M. 1997. "Schooling in persona: imagination and subordination in Roman education" *Classical Antiquity* 16, 570–78.

Cheynet, J.-C. 2003. "Basil II and Asia Minor", in Magdalino, P. (ed.), *Byzantium in the Year 1000*. Leiden, 71–108.

Croke, B. 2011. "Justinian the 'sleepless emperor'", in Nathan and Garland (eds) 2011, 101–8.

Dmitriev, S. 2015. "John Lydus' political message and the Byzantine idea of imperial rule" *BMGS* 39, 1–39.

Doležel, L. 1998. *Heterocosmica: Fiction and Possible Worlds*. Baltimore MD.

Fulda, D. 2014. "Historiographic Narration" in LHN (accessed 30 November 2017).

Garsoïan, N. 1997. "The Byzantine annexation of the Armenian kingdoms", in R. Hovhannisian (ed.), *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times. Vol. 1, The Dynastic Periods: From Antiquity to the Fourteenth Century*. New York, 187–98.

Herman, D. 2002. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative*. Lincoln, NE.

Herman, D. 2009. "Narrative ways of worldmaking", in S. Heinen and R. Sommer (eds) *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*. Narratologia 20, Berlin and New York, 71–87.

Holmes, C. 2006. *Basil II and the Governance of Empire (976–1025)*. Oxford.

Kustas, G. L. 1973. *Studies in Byzantine Rhetoric*. Analecta Vlatadon 17, Thessalonike.

LHN = The Living Handbook of Narratology. Eds P. Hühn et al. Hamburg 2013 [2009]: http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de

Ljubarskij, Y. N. 1998. "Quellenforschung and/or Literary Criticism: Narrative Structures in Byzantine Historical Writing" *Symbolae Osloenses* 73, 5–22.

Macrides, R. 1996. "The historian in the history", in C. N. Constantinides, N. M. Panagiotakes, E. Jeffreys and A. D. Angelou (eds) *ΦΙΛΕΛΛΗΝ: Studies in Honour of Robert Browning.* Venice, 205–24.

Macrides, R. 2010. "Editor's preface", in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium*. Aldershot, ix–xi.

Markopoulos, A. 2009. "From narrative historiography to historical biography: new trends in Byzantine historical writing in the tenth-eleventh centuries" *BZ* 102, 697–715.

Nathan, G. and L. Garland (eds) 2011. *BASILEIA: Essays on Imperium and Culture in Honour of E. M. and M. J. Jeffreys.* Brisbane.

Neville, L. 2012. *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-Century Byzantium: The Material for the History of Nikephoros Bryennios.* Cambridge.

Neville, L. 2016. *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian.* Oxford.

Nilsson, I. 2006. "To narrate the events of the past: on Byzantine historians, and historians on Byzantium", in J. Burke et al. (eds), *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott.* ByzAus 16, Melbourne, 47–58.

Palmer, A. 2004. *Fictional Minds.* Lincoln, NE.

Papaioannou, S. 2013. *Michael Psellos: Rhetoric and Authorship in Byzantium*. Cambridge.

——— 2014. "Byzantine *historia*", in K. A. Raaflaub (ed.), *Thinking, Recording, and Writing History in the Ancient World.* Chichester, West Sussex, 297–313.

Rapp, S. H. 2003. *Studies in Medieval Georgian Historiography: Early Texts and Eurasian Contexts.* Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium, Subsidia 113, Louvain.

Shepard, J. 1976. "Skylitzes on Armenia in the 1040s, and the role of Catacalon Cecaumenos" *RÉArm* n.s. 11, 269–311.

Smythe, D. 2013. "Experiencing self: how mid-Byzantine historians presented their experience", in C. Nesbitt and M. Jackson (eds), *Experiencing Byzantium: Papers from the 44th Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies.* SPBS 18, Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT, 251–66.

Talbot, A.-M. and D. Sullivan, 2005. *The History of Leo the Deacon: Byzantine Military Expansion in the Tenth Century.* Washington, DC.

Thomson, Robert W. 2003. "Aristakes of Lastivert and Armenian Reactions to Invasion", in Richard G. Hovannisian (ed.), *Armenian Karin.* Costa Mesa, 73–88.

LITURGICAL AND HAGIOGRAPHICAL STORYTELLING

6

DRAMATIC NARRATIVES AND RECOGNITION IN THE *KONTAKIA* OF ROMANOS THE MELODIST

Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen

The around sixty *kontakia*[1] from the hand of Romanos the Melodist (ca. 485–562 CE) attest to how authoritative, biblical and extra-biblical stories were retold in a liturgical context in early Byzantium. Through a narratological analysis, I shall demonstrate the mechanics of this kind of storytelling with a focus on one of the most important plot elements in drama and epic, according to Aristotle, namely recognition (*anagnōrisis*). Besides expanding and enriching the well-known stories from the Bible with extensive dialogues and monologues, a feature that has long been regarded as a dramatic dimension in these hymns, Romanos also carefully structured his storytelling around the key dramatic moments when a character recognises Christ as truly man and God, or fails to do so. Performing these dramatic narratives in song during all-night vigils in Constantinople, Romanos invited his congregation to go on imaginary journeys to the time and place of the biblical narratives. He did this in order to understand the motives, thoughts, and emotions behind the actions of biblical characters, especially to explore their often perplexing meeting with the divine in the guise of the human Jesus.

[1] In this article, I refer to the *kontakia* with the abbreviation "SC" followed by a number, which indicates the numbering in the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition by José Grosdidier de Matons. In references to specific stanzas in the *kontakia*, I use "st." followed by a number, sometimes with numbers after a comma to point out the lines in the stanza. The numbering of stanzas and lines follows that of the edition.

THE *KONTAKION* AS A GENRE: DRAMA, SERMON, NARRATIVE?

The *kontakion* is one of the major genres[2] in Byzantine hymnography.[3] Compared with the short monostrophic hymns known as *troparia*, the *kontakion* is a long, polystrophic hymn.[4] Furthermore, whereas the short hymns often consist of acclamations, doxologies, and prayer, the length of the *kontakion* allows the poet to dwell for some time on a specific theme, most often an episode from a story in the Bible. In his *kontakia*, Romanos expands biblical or extra-biblical[5] episodes by inventing monologues and dialogues between biblical characters. However, he also frequently comments on and explains the meaning of these episodes, like a preacher giving a sermon.

Because of the extensive use of dialogue, some scholars have compared the *kontakia* with ancient dramas, even suggesting that they were staged as a kind of liturgical theatre, although this view has been largely rejected.[6] Other scholars have emphasised the homiletic character of the *kontakion*, to such a degree, that they label the *kontakia* as

[2] Modern theoretical definitions of genre are vast and complex. I am inclined to favour the idea of texts as 'genre mosaics'. Rather than belonging to one genre only, texts are constructed by several different microgenres from speech acts such as a command to fully elaborated macrogenres such as a novel. See Larsen 2015, 17–18.

[3] For an overview on Byzantine hymnography, see McGuckin 2008 and Conomos 2017. On the word *kontakion*, which probably means 'little staff', see Grosdidier de Matons 1977, 37–38.

[4] More formally, a *kontakion* by Romanos often consists of a prooemium followed by generally 18–24 stanzas. In the prooimion the theme of the *kontakion* is announced and it ends with a refrain which is repeated in the end of each of the following stanzas. The first letter of each stanza form together an acrostic, which in the case of Romanos often reads 'by the humble Romanos', but occasionally also includes terms indicating the genre such as 'hymn', 'psalm', 'epic' or 'prayer' (see for instance Grosdidier de Matons 1977, 229). The generic terms, inscribed by the poet in the work itself, do not seem, however, to be related directly to the content of the *kontakion*, but are rather used as synonyms that reflect the overall character of this type of hymn.

[5] That is non-canonical writings such as apocrypha and hagiography.

[6] Probably the first mention of the dramatic or theatre-like character of the *kontakia* is found in the first editor of the *kontakia*, Cardinal J. B. Pitra's description of a resurrection *kontakion* (SC 38) which recounts "the unobserved drama carried out in mid-Lent" (*inaspectatum illud drama, in media quadragesima instructum*, Pitra 1876, 53n.). See also Bouvy 1886, 367, and Duval 1900, 24, for early mentions of the dramatic character. George La Piana (1912; 1936) and his pupil, Marjorie Carpenter (1936) suggested that dialogues in homilies and hymns were in some ways performed as a kind of theatre. However, R. J. Schork (1966) rejected this assumption. Indeed, a long-held view is that the Byzantines never developed liturgical theatre, a view that has strengthened in recent years through the research of Walter Puchner (2002, 322–24) and especially in Andrew Walker White's monograph on the subject (White 2015). Nikolaos Tomadakes (1974, 402–3) and Matthew Schroeder (2004, 212–20) have tried to demonstrate that Romanos knew and imitated the Greek tragedians, especially Euripides, but the evidence given is in my view too vague and only points to some slight thematic similarities. See also Schork 1995, 17, who refutes the theory of Tomadakes.

'sung sermons' or 'metrical homilies'.[7] Notwithstanding the theatrical potential of the dialogues and the homiletic character of many passages in the *kontakia*, both approaches tend to overemphasise certain important aspects of this genre for which the most appropriate term would rather be a *hymn with dramatic narrative told with a homiletic purpose*. Text-internal as well as the scattered text-external evidence leaves no doubt that the *kontakia* were intended to be sung.[8] Furthermore, the dialogues are always framed by the poet narrating and directing the action, and he will often draw moral or theological lessons from the stories in the beginning and the ending of a *kontakion*.[9] For these reasons, I prefer not to call the *kontakia* 'dramatic hymns', but rather hymns with dramatic narratives. As such, the *kontakia* continue a tradition of Christian storytelling.

The practice of storytelling in a Christian context goes all the way back to the Old Testament and to the ministry of Jesus who, according to the Evangelists, often taught by telling exemplifying stories, for instance about a good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) or a prodigal son (Luke 15:11–32).[10] During the early Byzantine period (400–800 CE) the society became increasingly influenced by biblical narrative, to such a degree that Derek Krueger has suggested the term "biblicization of many aspects of religious life."[11] Elite theological discourses as well as popular piety (processions, pilgrimage, and religious paraphernalia) attest to this phenomenon. The liturgical year was keyed to specific biblical events, and the liturgy became saturated with storytelling in the form of hymns and homilies that recounted the sacred stories in the Bible.[12] In this development, the *kontakia* with long and elaborated dramatic narratives by Romanos played an important part.

[7] Pitra (1876) called the collection of *kontakia cantica* as did Maas & Trypanis, whereas Elpidio Mioni, Tomadakes, and Grosdidier de Matons chose the word *hymn*. C. A. Trypanis further described the *kontakion* as a "sermon in verse accompanied by music" (Maas & Trypanis 1963, xi), and R. J. Schork "a sermon that was sung" (Schork 1995, ix). Johannes Koder calls his translations of the *kontakia hymns* (*Die Hymnen*), but also defines a *kontakion* more closely as "rhythmische oder metrische (poetische) Predigt" or "metrische Predigt-Hymnen" (Koder 2005, 22 and 34).

[8] For instance, in ch. 18 the seventh-century *Miracles of Artemios*, which tells about a cleric who attended all-night vigils and "sang hymns by the humble Romanos", see Krueger 2014, 65. No musical notation survives from the time of Romanos, but later manuscripts (known as *Psaltika* and *Kontakaria*) from the twelfth century contain melodies that can be interpreted with some accuracy, see Troelsgård 2011.

[9] See Barkhuizen 1989.

[10] That narratives in different types form a major part of the Bible has been recognized in research since the 1970s which witnessed a narrative turn in biblical scholarship. For an overview, see Finnern 2014.

[11] Krueger 2005, 292.

[12] See further in Krueger 2014, 67–105.

DRAMATIC NARRATIVES IN THE *KONTAKIA* COMMUNICATION, STRUCTURES, RECOGNITION

As mentioned, we often find long monologues and dialogues framed by narration in the retelling of biblical and extra-biblical stories in the *kontakia*. What renders these narratives dramatic, however, is not only the dialogues, but also the structure of the narratives, in other words their plots. As I intend to show later, recognition (*anagnōrisis*) as a core plot element is found frequently in the *kontakia* of Romanos. In the third part of this article, I shall give examples of recognitions in the *kontakia* and analyse them using a method developed by the New Testament scholar K. B. Larsen.[13] First, I shall present some general characteristics of the techniques and mechanics of Romanos's storytelling with a special focus on narrative communication and narrative structure and then present the method for analysing recognition in narratives.

Narrative communication

A fundamental question is of course 'what is a narrative?' and more specifically 'what is a narrative in the *kontakia* of Romanos?' Various answers to the first question might be found in this volume, and among narratologists there are several definitions given. For instance, according to James Phelan, a narrative is an event: "somebody telling somebody else on some occasion and for some purpose(s) that something happened".[14] This definition is rhetorical, stressing that stories are always told in certain contexts to achieve specific means, in other words, a narrative is communicated. The analyses in this article are based on this definition of narrative, however with extensive borrowings from the so-called classical narratology of Gérard Genette. In his highly influential *Narrative Discourse,*[15] Genette introduced and developed many analytical concepts which have since been widely accepted by narratologists. One of these concepts is the distinction between the so-called extradiegetic and intradiegetic levels of narration, to which I shall return shortly.

Concerning the second question, 'what is a narrative in the *kontakia* in Romanos?', the narratives are only parts of the *kontakia*. Unlike a novel where the whole text is a fictional work, Romanos tells stories during his *kontakia*, but also devotes time to pray, to exhort, to explain and to teach his audience. The *kontakia* thus resemble rhetorical speeches in which an orator uses narrative to explain the background for an accusation etc.[16] These narratives inserted in the *kontakia* are as mentioned most often retellings of biblical and extra-biblical stories, focused on a particular episode, for instance the

[13] Larsen 2008.

[14] Phelan 2007, 203.

[15] Genette 1980. Originally published in French as *Figures III,* Paris 1972.

[16] On the use of narrative (*diēgēsis*) in rhetoric, see Lausberg 1960, §§ 260–92.

sacrifice of Isaac (Gen 22), the birth of Christ (e.g. Luke 2:1–20), his baptism (e.g. Matt 3:13–16), passion (e.g. John 18–19) and resurrection (e.g Matt 28).[17] In Genette's words, the narratives are hypertexts grafted on biblical hypotexts.[18] The Bible is not simply the source of Romanos's retellings, as he transforms the stories in several ways, one of which is to tell a well-known story from another perspective, to fill in gaps where the hypotext is silent or, as we shall see, focus on the emotional impact when a biblical character goes through a recognition.

These stories are told by the main and overall speaker (the enunciating subject) in the whole *kontakion*. In the non-narrative sections (prayer, doxology, explanations etc), one could hypothetically call the speaker an orator, in the narrative a narrator[19] who besides narrating the story is responsible for the ordering of events recounted, the values directly or indirectly governing the narrative, and the aesthetic quality of the whole text.[20] However, this distinction between an orator and a narrator is too artificial, as it is the same speaker throughout the whole of the text. I thus refer to the speaker as Romanos, although I do not hereby imply that we get any access to the life and mind of the poet Romanos who lived in sixth-century Constantinople. He has left only an imprint, his works, in which his *persona* speaks, preaches, exhorts and tells stories.

Since the 'proto-narratology' of Plato and Aristotle, a fundamental distinction in storytelling is that between speakers: either the poet speaks in his own voice (*diēgēsis*), or he imitates the voice of someone else, a character in his story (*mimēsis*).[21] For Plato, this distinction resulted in a category of poetry divided in drama (pure *mimēsis*), dithyramb (pure *diēgēsis*) and epic, which is a mix of both voices.[22] The narratives in the *kontakia* clearly belong to the epic category, but also differ in the sense that they are devot-

[17] For the Gospel episodes, I cite only one example, although Romanos often draws from all the Gospels in his retellings.

[18] These concepts denote "any relationship uniting a text B (which I shall call the hypertext) to an earlier text A (I shall, of course call it the hypotext), upon which it is grafted in a manner that is not that of commentary". Text B originates either through a process of imitation or transformation of text A. As model examples, Genette gives the *Odyssey* as hypotext, upon which the hypertexts Virgil's *Aeneid* and James Joyce's *Ulysses* are modelled by imitation of the original, see Genette 1997, 1–7.

[19] As de Jong suggests (de Jong et al. 2004, 7–8).

[20] See Phelan 2007, 210, for these so-called 'narrator-functions'.

[21] For an overview of the terms in narratology, see Halliwell 2012, from which I have borrowed the designation 'proto-narratology'.

[22] Plato, *Republic* 392c–394d.

ed to mostly one episode.[23] Some, however, are almost exclusively told in *mimēsis*,[24] and it is therefore quite understandable that scholars have questioned whether these texts were intended for some kind of theatrical performance. Some of these narratives in almost pure *mimēsis*, however, do not really tell a story, but are rather what José Grosdidier de Matons called "sermons put in the mouth of a character".[25] The dramatic narratives in the *kontakia* are thus the ones where most of the story is told in *mimēsis* and where something happens besides someone preaching to someone else. The distinction between the two fundamental ways of narrating may be further defined by applying Genette's terms extradiegetic and intradiegetic to the levels of narration.

The *extradiegetic* level is the rhetorical situation in which the story is told, i.e. it includes the non-narrative sections of the hymn in which Romanos speaks to his audience in direct address, and in which the purpose is to exhort, to exult, or to teach, but primarily relates to the narration of the narrative in third person. The *intradiegetic* level is inside the narrative (or storyworld, as David Herman suggests)[26] in which characters from the biblical or extra-biblical narratives act and speak. It is inside the narrative, at the intradiegetic level, that we find the dramatic dimension with inner and outer monologue and dialogue, plot, recognition scenes, and reversals.[27] A further level can be added to this distinction, the *hypodiegetic*. This level is the level at which a character in a character's story is telling a story (that is: someone telling a story within a story itself within a story told by Romanos).

The events and actions taking place in the storyworld may be narrated by Romanos (extradiegetic/*diēgēsis*) or told through the speeches of the characters (intradiegetic/*mimēsis*). An illustrative example is from the *kontakion On the Leper*, where the leper speaks about his actions, and subsequently Romanos narrates the action:

[23] However, two *kontakia* stand out as more 'epic' in the sense that Romanos tells a story that includes several episodes: *On Joseph I* (SC 5) and *On the Adoration of the Cross* (SC 39).

[24] These include e.g. *On the Nativity I* (SC 10), *On Mary at the Cross* (SC 35), and *On the Victory of the Cross* (SC 38). For a narratological analysis of the latter also focusing on the use of recognition, see Eriksen 2010.

[25] Grosdidier de Matons 1977, 321: "un sermon placé dans le bouche d'un des personnages".

[26] Herman et al. 2008, 569–70 ("Storyworld"). See also Vukašinović and Weller in this volume.

[27] I prefer to define these levels as extra- and intradiegetic, rather than as extra- and intratextual dialogue, as Mary Cunningham with Ingunn Lunde has suggested (Cunningham 2003, 102–3). The definition is very close to that of J. H. Barkhuizen, who defines the two levels as "liturgical world" and "sacred myth world" (Barkhuizen 1986, 19). Furthermore, I am aware that I stretch these terms a bit, as the non-narrative sections of the text do not belong to the narrative, but often a commentary, a prayer or an exhortation is related intertextually or metatextually to the narrative. Also, the plot elements of recognition and reversal can and will often be narrated by the poet at the extratexual level.

"Strengthened by faith the woman with an issue of blood touched his hem and was cured.
I too will hasten to entreat the timeless Master, for he is good."
Having said this, he runs with his petition
and, bending his knee to the ground, he implores Christ.[28]

Here, the speech of the leper is given in quotation marks. There are no quotation marks in the manuscripts so it is sometimes difficult to tell who is speaking, Romanos or a character.[29] For the most part, though, it is evident in the context, as Romanos often introduces a speech of a character by an *inquit*, i.e. an indication by the narrator of who speaks as "he/she said". He can sometimes insert an inquit during a (long) speech of a character, at other times break off the speech for a while to add comments, or insert it after the speech.

In the example above there is also a micro-narrative about the woman with an issue of blood.[30] Here, the leper becomes an intradiegetic narrator, telling a short story about a transformation of another character from one state to another: the woman had an issue of blood, but was cured by faith and by touching the hem of Christ. This kind of embedded storytelling, i.e. a story within a story, is frequent in the *kontakia*. Even when characters refer to what someone else has said, they often quote the utterance of the other character in *mimēsis*, or direct speech, instead of narrating it in indirect speech. For instance, in the *kontakion On the Nativity I*, we have both indirect speech and direct speech in a story told by characters. In this *kontakion*, Romanos retells the story of Christ's birth. When the Magi have arrived, they tell Mary a short story about what King Herod and the Pharisees asked them about. In this example, the indirect speech is marked with italics, the direct speech with single quotation marks, when the Magi narrate:

"First Herod, then, *as you said*, the leaders of your nation
inquired of us exactly the time
of this star which is now visible."[31]

"They thought us mad, the fools,
and asked, 'From where have you come and when?
And how have you journeyed by unseen paths?'

[28] SC 20, st. 9, 1–4: "Νευρωθεῖσα τῇ πίστει ἡ αἱμόρρους ἁψαμένη κρασπέδου ἰάθη· / σπεύσω κἀγὼ τὸν ἄχρονον καθικετεῦσαι δεσπότην ὡς ἀγαθόν." / Ὡς ἐφθέγξατο δὲ ταῦτα, μετὰ δε[ή]σεως ἐκτρέχει καὶ εἰς τὴν γῆν τὸ γόνυ κλίνας ἱκετεύ[ει] Χριστόν. English translation from Lash 1995, 54.

[29] This is particularly the case in the hymn *Stichera on the Nativity* (SC 13), which is not a *kontakion*, but a series of stanzas (*stichera*). Furthermore, the authenticity of this hymn is disputed. See Maas & Trypanis 1970, xiii.

[30] The story is told in the Synoptic Gospels, for instance Matt 9:20–22.

[31] SC 10, st. 17, 4–6: "'Ηρώδης πρῶτον, εἶτα, ὡς ἔφησας, οἱ πρῶτοι τοῦ ἔθνους σου / τὸν χρόνον τούτου τοῦ φαινομένου νῦν / ἄστρου παρ' ἡμῶν ἐξηκριβώσαντο". Tr. Lash 1995, 9.

> But we in turn asked them what they already knew,
> 'But how did you of old journey through
> the great desert which you crossed?'"[32]

In this short story inside the Nativity narrative, the questions and verbal reactions of king Herod and the Pharisees are narrated in indirect speech. Then the Magi quote the questions of the Pharisees in direct speech. Here, the Magi not only recount the words of the Pharisees, they also quote their own answers in direct speech, whereby an embedded (hypodiegetic) dialogue is represented. The different levels of narration are thus:

> Romanos says (extradiegetic),
> that the Magi say (intradiegetic),
> that the Pharisees say (hypodiegetic): "From where have you come and when?"

One of Romanos's mechanics of retelling biblical and extra-biblical stories is thus to replace and position the events in the hypotext (Matt 2:1–12) in the mouth of his characters. The difference is striking when comparing with the narrative in the Gospel of Matthew: here, the meeting with Herod is told by the author (extradiegetic) *before* the Magi's visit at the birthplace of Christ. In the *kontakion*, the Magi tell it *after* their arrival at Christ's birthplace. Furthermore, they imbue their story of the meeting with their observation that the Pharisees "thought us mad" and who ask a question which for the Magi is self-evident – they were led by God, as were the Israelites through the desert (although this must be inferred by the audience from the counter question of the Magi). This way, Romanos lets his audience (over)hear the experiences and moral judgements of the Magi from their point of view, thus bringing his audience closer to the characters and events heightening the degree of experientiality.[33]

If levels of narration – who speaks – pertain to the vertical dimension in narratives, then the way the narrative unfolds and progresses might be defined as its horizontal dimension, in other words the structure of the narrative.

[32] SC 10, st. 18, 1–6: Ὑπενόουν ἡμᾶς ἄφρονας οἱ ἀνόητοι / καὶ ἠρώτων, φησί· Πόθεν καὶ πότε ἥκατε; / πῶς μὴ φαινομένας ὡδεύσατε τρίβους; / Ἡμεῖς δὲ τούτοις ὅπερ ἠπίσταντο ἀντεπηρωτήσαμεν·/ Ὑμεῖς τὸ πάρος πῶς διωδεύσατε / ἔρημον πολλὴν ἥνπερ διήλθετε. Tr. Lash 1995, 10.

[33] In some *kontakia*, he will even merge the levels of narration, either by addressing his characters directly or by letting the characters speak, as it were, to him or to the audience. In Genette's terminology, this phenomenon or play with levels of narration is called *metalepsis* and is often seen as a hallmark of postmodern literature, but also very frequent in classical and late antique literature – and Byzantine hymns. On metalepsis, see Pier 2016.

Narrative Structure

Often Romanos begins his narratives *in medias res* after one or a few stanzas of either instruction, commentary, or doxology.[34] In many *kontakia*, the story is then told linearly. However, if we take the *kontakion* as a whole, the main theme of the story – a condensed plot – is sometimes revealed already in the proems and/or the first stanzas. In the course of the telling, this revealing beforehand is called a *prolepsis* by Genette. This kind of prolepsis is similar to the opening of grand epics like the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, and the *Aeneid*, where a summary of the events is given beforehand by the poet.[35]

An example of a prolepsis that actually extends beyond the events narrated in the story can be found in *On the Passion of Christ*.[36] The narrative in this *kontakion* takes place in the court of Pilate where Christ is interrogated, flogged, and handed over to crucifixion. The story ends with Christ being taken down from the cross (st. 22). Nevertheless, the two proems and the first two stanzas tell about the events that happened after the crucifixion and relates what happened during Christ's descent to Hell and at his resurrection. Likewise, the opposite of prolepsis, *analepsis*[37] is also used – often as embedded narratives – when a character tells what has happened *before* the events taking place in the main narrative. In the example given above from "On the Nativity I," the Magi tell Mary about what happened before they arrived at the birthplace of Christ.

Concerning the concept of plot, there are many different outlines of typical plots found in various literary genres.[38] A simple definition given by Tzvetan Todorov is: a plot consists of a disruption introduced in the storyworld to upset the equilibrium.[39] A similar definition can be found already in Aristotle. The ancient philosopher defines in his *Poetics* plot (*mythos*) as a structure of events (*sunthesin tōn pragmatōn*) with a change in fortune (*metabasis*) for one or more characters – from adversity to prosperity or vice versa.[40] Furthermore, the part of e.g. a tragedy leading up to the metabasis is called the complication (*desis*), and the part from the metabasis to the end of the tragedy is called a dénouement (*lusis*). This two-part structure from complication to

[34] See also Schroeder 2004, 212–20, about *in medias res* in the *kontakia*.

[35] Genette 1980, 67.

[36] SC 36.

[37] Genette 1980, 40.

[38] See for instance Culpepper 1983, 79–84, for an overview over different definitions of plot and plot-types. See also Herman et al. 2008, 435–39 ("Plot") and 439–40 ("Plot-types"), as well as Kukkonen 2014.

[39] See Herman 2007, 18–19.

[40] εἰς εὐτυχίαν ἐκ δυστυχίας ἢ ἐξ ἐυτυχίας εἰς δυστυχίαν μεταβάλλειν, Aristotle, *Poetics* 1451a14.

dénouement corresponds to Todorov's definition of plot as a disruption introduced to upset the equilibrium and a restoration of the equilibrium.[41]

The plots in the *kontakia* of Romanos often follow this simple structure: the introduction of a disruption can be caused by mistake or misunderstanding, or more often by an act of God, which causes confusion among the characters. Romanos's plots follow that of the hypotexts, slowing down however the pace of the telling with monologues and dialogues to contemplate the thoughts and motives behind the events.[42] In the *kontakia* with dramatic narratives the defining moment is recognition, acquiring knowledge. This knowledge is salvific, as it is always about how to conceive of Christ as human and God, with an exception being the enemies of God (Hell, the Devil, and Death) for whom the recognition is tragic and leads to their fall.

Recognition

The use of recognition in the *kontakia* is by no means a speciality of Romanos. Many biblical stories focus on one or more character's ability to recognize God, as recognition is closely connected with revelation and the mystical experience of meeting God. It should then come as no surprise that homilies and hymns that recount biblical stories also have recognition as a theme, which Judit Kecskeméti has shown is the case for several late antique homilies, as well as the *kontakia* of Romanos, although she does not provide any lengthy analysis.[43] Recognition is also very common in hagiography, when saints play holy fools or cross-dress in order not to be recognized.[44] What sets Romanos's use of recognition apart is that he foregrounds the moment of recognition in ways similar to classical drama and also the Gospel of John.

K. B. Larsen has recently analysed the use of recognition as a plot element or "scene" in classical literature and in the Gospel of John in his book *Recognizing the Stanger*.[45]

[41] With the important addition that in the *Poetics* of Aristotle the initial state of equilibrium is presupposed as the situation before the complication, which can lie outside the beginning of the tragedy, cf. *Poetics* 1455b23–29. See also Herman et al. 2008, 189–90 ("Freytag's triangle"), where Manfred Jahn suggests that Freytag's model, which was based on Aristotle, can be reformulated as basically complication and resolution, and the entry "Narrative structure", 367, where Patrick O'Neill suggests that disruption and return to equilibrium is the basic structure behind Aristotle's and Freytag's models.

[42] In the terminology of Genette, the narratives in the *kontakia* are more scene than summary, see Genette 1980, 95.

[43] Kecskeméti 1993, 63–64.

[44] Furthermore, the recognition or the deliberate delay of a recognition is, according to Julie Van Pelt, an important part of the plot and the development of a saint's *Life* narrative as is the case with the cross-dresser Theodora in the *Life of Theodora* or the holy fool Symeon in the *Life of Symeon*. See Van Pelt in this volume, esp. the section "Plot". See also Constantinou 2014, 354.

[45] Larsen 2008.

From this corpus of literature, he has constructed a model of the typical recognition scene. Following Aristotle, Larsen defines recognition as "a change from ignorance to knowledge".[46] This basic definition is then further elaborated by use of semiotic theory, especially from Algirdas Julien Greimas. In a recognition, two characters meet: the observer and the observed. The *observer* is the one who recognises something or someone as truly being what they claim to be, by means of proof. The proof is usually provided in the display of some sort of sign or token.[47] The *observed* can for instance state an identity claim (i.e. a linguistic token, e.g. "I am Odysseus") or show it by displaying some kind of visible sign (i.e. a non-linguistic token, e.g. Odysseus's scar).[48]

Based on the analysis of classical literature, Larsen presents a model of the typical pattern of the recognition scene. This model comprises five 'moves': the meeting, the move of cognitive resistance, the move of displaying the token, the move of recognition, and attendant reactions and physical (re-)union. In this chapter, I shall focus on three moves: cognitive resistance, displaying the token and the recognition. Larsen defines these as follows: *Cognitive resistance* – the true identity of the observed is suggested or claimed. The observer does not believe the claim, is confused by the appearance of the observed, and will try to argue against the claim. *The move of displaying the token* – the true identity is claimed again by giving proof with a token. The observer may test this proof, for instance by demanding knowledge that only the true person would know. *Recognition* – a move that is often told in retrospect by the observer who has experienced recognition.[49]

Larsen stresses that while this outline highlights significant moves in a recognition scene, a move can be absent, or the moves can be presented in another order.[50] For instance, the cognitive resistance in the observer can delay the recognition substantially, or prevent it from happening at all (called "an-anagnorisis" by Larsen).[51] In the following section, I shall apply this model to show how Romanos uses recognition as a theme, a dramatic device, and a didactic tool in his *kontakia*.[52]

[46] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1452a29–30: ἀναγνώρισις δέ, ὥσπερ καὶ τοὔνομα σημαίνει, ἐξ ἀγνοίας εἰς γνῶσιν μεταβολή.
[47] Ibid., 44–48.
[48] Ibid., 49–51.
[49] Ibid., 63–71.
[50] Ibid., 63.
[51] Ibid., 66.
[52] An allusion to the title of Cunningham's article about the use of dialogue as a dramatic device or didactic tool in Byzantine homilies and hymns (Cunningham 2003).

RECOGNITION IN THE *KONTAKIA* OF ROMANOS THE MELODIST

I begin with recognition as a theme. In the *kontakion On the Epiphany* (SC 17), seeing (and reading) and recognition is a central theme. This hymn is dedicated to the celebration of the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, but does not contain a long dramatic narrative with recognition. It belongs to the more homiletic type of *kontakion*.[53] The story of the baptism of Jesus acts only as background and point of comparison to which Romanos gives several examples from the Old Testament of people who encountered God but did not recognize or see him, for instance:

> When God showed himself for Abraham who sat by the oak in Mamre, he did so in the guise of an angel;
> He [Abraham] did not recognize who he [God] was, because he could not endure it.
> Now, for us [he has shown himself] not in that way, but without a mask:
> For the Word became flesh.[54]

Romanos recounts the story about God visiting Abraham by the oak in Mamre (Gen 18:1–15) and compares Abraham with himself and his audience: Abraham was not able to recognize God, as God had disguised himself as an angel,[55] but Romanos and his audience are able to see and recognize God because of the incarnation. With the incarnation where "the Word became flesh" (a direct quote from the Gospel of John 1:14) God manifested himself "without a mask" (*autoprosōpōs*) whereby humans can endure to see him. Romanos continues to tease out how even patriarchs, prophets and kings of the Old Testament could not see and recognize God who showed himself to them in "shadows" (*skiai*) and "images" (*eikones*).[56] The patriarch Jacob saw God in a dream (st. 5, 1); Moses did not see the face of God (st. 6, 3–4); the prophet Isaiah saw God, but "not with his bodily eyes"[57]; likewise the prophet Daniel and King David desired to be able to see God (st. 8, 5–9), but this ability has only been available after the birth of Christ (st. 9–10). Romanos then puts forward the mother of Christ and John the Baptist as examples of true faith, as they call Christ "the Lord" (st. 10, 7) and the "Lamb of God" (st. 12, 6–7). In other words, they recognize God in the human Jesus. Paradoxically, after having shown all the examples where God has made himself manifest in

[53] According to Grosdidier de Matons (1965, 263) "[c]e n'est pas un drame à plusieurs personnages, mais un simple sermon en vers, d'une facture austere et d'une composition hésitante".

[54] SC 17, st. 4, 1–4: Τῷ Ἀβραὰμ ὅτε ὤφθη Θεὸς πρὸς τῇ δρυῒ καθημένῳ Μαμβρῇ, ὡς ἄγγελος ἐθεωρήθη, / μὴ γνωρίσας αὐτὸν ὅπερ ἦν, οὐ γὰρ ἔφερεν· / νῦν δὲ ἡμῖν, οὐχ οὕτως, ἀλλὰ αὐτοπροσώπως / ὁ γὰρ Λόγος σὰρξ γέγονεν. My translation.

[55] In some manuscripts, the reading says that God "was seen as a human (*anthrōpos*)" which is more in line with the Septuagint version where Abraham "saw three men (*treis andres*)", see the apparatus to stanza 4 in SC 17 (= Grosdidier de Matons 1965, 274).

[56] πατράσιν αἱ σκιαί, πατριάρχαις εἰκόνες, / τοῖς δὲ τέκνοις αὐτὴ ἡ ἀλήθεια, st. 4, 6–7.

[57] οὐκ ἐν ὄμμασι σώματος, st. 7, 4.

Scripture, Romanos ends his hymn by stating his desire to also see God (st. 17, 1) and prays that Christ will give him a sign (*sēmeion*, st. 18, 1): to be cleansed from his unseen and hidden wounds (*adēla traumata*, st. 18, 2). The ability to see and recognize God for Romanos is thus connected with healing granted to him by God on behalf of his song and his prayers.

Another theme is seeing God in Scripture, or, put in other words, recognizing Christ as God in and through the Bible. Throughout the hymn, the recurrent metaphors are light and darkness, most emphatically stated in the refrain, where Christ "has appeared and given light to everyone"[58] – again almost quoting directly from the Gospel of John where Christ the Word and true light has come to the world and "gives light to everyone".[59] Adam was deceived by the "Blinder" (*o pērosas*, the Devil or snake, st. 2, 2) in the Garden of Eden and lost his ability to see after eating from the "fruit that makes blind".[60] Romanos is deliberately ironic in saying that the fruit makes blind, as the Septuagint on the contrary tells that by eating from the tree, Adam and Eve's eyes were opened and they were able to see that they were naked (Gen 3:7). Because of this blindness, humans were not able to see God before the incarnation. After the incarnation, however, God can be seen everywhere, especially in the Bible. Addressing Christ, Romanos exclaims:

> You are confirmed by every writing inspired by God:
> They all bear witness about you, the Law and the Prophets
> and especially the Fathers.[61]

The "Fathers" in this quote are the Old Testament patriarchs. Although the protagonists in the Old Testament stories were not able to see God, there is nothing hidden in the Bible for the faithful Christians, Romanos asserts. Seeing is thus connected with reading and interpreting the holy scriptures which heretics are not able to do.[62] Although it is not stated explicitly in this *kontakion*, Romanos explains in other *kontakia* that the reason for heresy is blindness and the lack of ability to read and interpret the Bible. In a *kontakion* on the resurrection, Romanos states that the Arians (who

[58] φανέντα καὶ φωτίσαντα πάντα.

[59] ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, John 1:9. All quotes from the New Testament are from the 28th edition of the Nestle-Aland edition, which is accessible online at http://www.nestle-aland.com/en/read-na28-online/.

[60] καρποῦ γευσάμενος τυφλοποιοῦ, st. 2, 1.

[61] ἀπὸ πάσης γραφῆς θεοπνεύστου συνίστασαι / πάντες σοι μαρτυροῦσι, νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται, / οἱ πατέρες δὲ μάλιστα, st. 14, 2–4.

[62] Romanos alludes to two connected kinds of heretics in his lifetime who either fantasise (*phantazō*) about seeing God or only seem to know (*dokōn eidenai*) God, possibly an attack against Phantasiasm and Docetism, two heresies which claimed that God did not become human, he only appeared to be. See further in Grosdidier de Matons 1965, 263–4, and 282 n. 1.

claimed that Christ was not fully God) derived their heresy from reading the Bible erroneously. This false way of reading – and thus not recognizing Christ as God but holding him to be nothing but a "mere man" (*psilos anthrōpos*) – they share with the Devil.[63]

As is clear from these passages in this hymn, recognition is a central theme, however not elaborated as a dramatic narrative with dialogue and plot. The following two examples both contain dramatic scenes with dialogue where one or more characters go through a process of recognition which often entails a change of circumstances for them.

Nativity II – recognizing the breath of God

One recognition which is part of a quite amusing marital quarrel scene is the one found in *On the Nativity II*.[64] In this *kontakion*, Romanos retells the story of the birth of Christ but from an unexpected perspective: as seen, or rather sensed from Hell by Adam and Eve, the first humans who are sleeping in the Netherworld. The hymn begins with Mary, the mother of Jesus, praising her newborn child in the cave. This praise descends as sound into Hell where it first reaches the ears of Eve. Immediately recognizing that Mary has given birth to Christ, God the saviour, Eve is full of joy as this birth entails that she and Adam will be liberated from their misery in Hell. Adam, whom Eve tries to wake up from his "death-like sleep" (*isothanaton upnon*, st. 4, 2), also hears the voice but reacts in a quite opposite way:

> "I hear a sweet sound, a delightful humming,
> only this time the voice of the singer does not please me!
> For it is a woman and I fear her voice.
> I have an experience from which I fear the female (sex).
> The tone enchants me, sweet as it is,
> the instrument, however, makes me shake, lest that she should deceive me like long ago."[65]

Hearing Mary's voice does not lead to any recognition for Adam; on the contrary, his experience tells him to be aware. He fears a woman's voice, because it was Eve, the first of all women, who – according to him – was responsible for their fall from Paradise

[63] See *On the Resurrection* IV (SC 43), st. 13–14 and st. 17. See also Constas 2002 for the theme of heresy linked with false reading and interpretation of the Bible, and Krueger 2004, 6–8, about Scripture as a material manifestation of God.

[64] SC 11.

[65] SC 11, st. 5, 5–10. "Γλυκεροῦ ἀκούω κελαδήματος, τερπνοῦ μινυρίσματος, / ἀλλὰ τοῦ μελίζοντος νῦν ὁ φθόγγος οὐ τέρπει με· / γυνὴ γάρ ἐστιν, ἧς καὶ φοβοῦμαι τὴν φωνήν·/ ἐν πείρᾳ εἰμί, ὅθεν τὸ θῆλυ δειλιῶ· / ὁ μὲν ἦχος θέλγει με ὡς λιγυρός, / τὸ ὄργανον δὲ δονεῖ μὴ ὡς πάλαι με πλανήσῃ". My translation.

(Gen 3). He shows cognitive resistance against the claim of his spouse.[66] Eve then tries one more time to convince him, promising that she will not again "give bitter advice".[67] She encourages him to smell instead of listening as "Jesus Christ blows as a sweet breeze of air",[68] which brings with it Spring and reinvigorating power. Adam this time follows the advice of his spouse and exclaims:

> "O woman, I have recognized Spring and I catch the scent of the delight[69]
> from which we fell out long ago [...]
> I sense, O spouse, the life-giving breath,
> which made me, who was dust and lifeless clay
> into a living being."[70]

In this stanza, Adam finally has a recognition and discovers what is actually going on. Even though "I have recognized" (*egnōn*) could also be translated as "I have perceived", referring to Adam's sensory experience of smelling the scent through his nostrils, my translation puts emphasis on the theme of recognition. The token is breath, which triggers Adam's memory, what Aristotle would call recognition through memory.[71] The breath is the same breath that once made him alive (an implicit reference to Gen 2:7, put in the mouth of Adam) where God breathes the breath of life into Adam's nostrils. In this way, he confirms and implicitly confesses that the child in Mary's womb is God the creator.

On the Ascension – recognition by means of reason

In the *kontakion On the Ascension*,[72] it is the closest allies of Christ, his disciples, who go through a dramatic recognition. The *kontakion* is based on the ascension accounts

[66] In these lines, there might also be a deliberate intertextual play on the *Odyssey*. Romanos tells that when Adam wakes up, he "opened his ear, which disobedience had blocked up" (οὖς ἀνοίξας ὃ ἔφραξε παρακοὴ, st. 5, 4) and a few lines later, Adam says Mary's voice enchants him: "The tone enchants me, sweet as it is" (ὁ μὲν ἦχος θέλγει με ὡς λιγυρός) which sounds strikingly similar to the Sirens who "enchant with their sweet song" (Σειρῆνες λιγυρῇ θέλγουσιν ἀοιδῇ, Od. 12.44) for which reason Circe advises Odysseus to block his ears with wax. If there is a deliberate play on the *Odyssey*, it is antithetical: Mary is an anti-Siren and Adam an anti-Odysseus (as Homer's hero did not block his ears with wax).

[67] πικρά [...] συμβουλεύουσαν, st. 6, 2.

[68] Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς πνέει ὡς αὔρα γλυκερά, st. 6, 7.

[69] In Greek τρυφή, which is here used metonymically about Paradise, the Garden of Eden.

[70] "Ἔγνων, ὦ γύναι, τὸ ἔαρ καὶ τῆς τρυφῆς ὀσφραίνομαι / ἧς ἐξεπέσαμεν πάλαι·[...] ᾐσθόμην πνοῆς, σύζυγε, τῆς ζωοποιοῦ / τῆς κόνιν ἐμὲ ὄντα καὶ ἄψυχον πηλὸν / ποιησάσης ἔμψυχον", st. 7, 1–2; 7–9.

[71] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1454b37–1455a1.

[72] SC 48. All translated excerpts of this *kontakion* are from Lash 1995, 195–205, although the numbering of the verses follow the edition in SC.

in Luke 24:50–53 and Acts 1:1–12 and the overall theme, repeated in the refrain, is that of Christ God's omnipresence: "I am not parting from you: I am with you and there is no one against you."[73] The drama arises out of the disciples' fear and assumption that Christ will leave them and never return: "Are you leaving us, O Compassionate One? Parting from those who love you?"[74] This fear is turned around to joy and happiness when the disciples recognize their misunderstanding and by divine instruction given by angels are persuaded into believing that Christ is not parting from them. Three tokens are given to the disciples before they recognize what is going on. First, Christ tells them that whereas his visible body is being taken up, "every place is full of my Godhead"[75], a statement that of course sounds paradoxical. The second token is that Christ is taken up on a cloud assisted by angels (st. 10–12). Whereas these two tokens heighten their cognitive resistance, the third token does wonders. The third token is that the angels descend to teach the disciples about the ascension. This finally convinces the disciples and they recognize that Christ is still among them:

> "These are surely faithful witnesses
> of Christ's assumption, for they are heavenly beings,
> for had they not seen him on high in heaven,
> they would not have come down to proclaim it to us.
> He is Master of angels and through angels makes known
> his loving dispensations for mankind, he who dawned from the Virgin.
> He was born, and angels revealed his nativity.
> He was raised, and again angels revealed his rising.
> He has ascended into heaven,
> and has revealed to us his divine and radiant
> assumption through good angels."[76]

This is a recognition by means of reason:[77] first of all, the angels could not tell about Christ, if they had not seen him above. Second, the birth of Christ and the rising from the grave after his death were both announced by angels who are the heralds of God; in the same way, the ascension of Christ must also be announced by God through his angels, the disciples reason.

[73] Οὐ χωρίζομαι ὑμῶν· ἐγώ εἰμι μεθ' ὑμῶν καὶ οὐδεὶς καθ' ὑμῶν. The refrain is a combination of Matt 28:20 ἐγώ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι and Romans 8:31 ὁ θεὸς ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν, τίς καθ' ἡμῶν;.

[74] "Ἀφεὶς ἡμᾶς, οἰκτίρμων, χωρίζῃ τῶν φιλούντων;" st. 4, 5.

[75] "ἡ σὰρξ γὰρ ἣν ὁρᾶτε αὐτὴ τὰ ἄνω φθάνει· / τῆς γὰρ θεότητός μου πᾶς τόπος μεστός", st. 9, 5–6.

[76] SC 48, st. 15, 3–13: "Ὄντως πιστοὶ μάρτυρες / τῆς Χριστοῦ ἀναλήψεως οὗτοι ὡς ἐπουράνιοι· / εἰ μὴ γὰρ εἶδον τοῦτον ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ ἄνω, / οὐκ ἂν κατῆλθον κάτω κηρῦξαι ἡμῖν· / ἀγγέλων δεσπόζει καὶ δι' ἀγγέλων γνωρίζει / τὰς φιλανθρώπους οἰκονομίας ὁ ἀνατείλας ἐκ τῆς παρθένου· / ἐτέχθη, καὶ τὴν γέννησιν τούτου ἐδήλουν ἄγγελοι· / ἠγέρθη, καὶ τὴν ἔγερσιν πάλιν ἐδήλουν ἄγγελοι· / ἀνῆλθεν εἰς οὐρανούς, / καὶ τὴν θείαν καὶ φαιδρὰν ἀνάληψιν αὐτοῦ / δι' ἀγγέλων ἀγαθῶν ἐδήλωσεν ἡμῖν".

[77] Aristotle, *Poetics* 1455a4–15.

The initial sadness and distress, indeed the expected result of Christ parting from the disciples, is turned completely around for them. By recognizing that God has not left them, the recognition also brings about a change of fortune for them.

CONCLUSION: WHY TELL DRAMATIC NARRATIVES IN THE *KONTAKIA*?

According to Romanos himself, he recounts stories from the Bible in order to understand "what then does the Bible teach?"[78] to "carefully contemplate what Christ says to the Leper approaching him"[79] or to "search the mind of the wise woman / and to know how the Lord came to shine in her" (the sinful woman in Luke 7:6–50 who anoints Jesus with precious oil).[80] The driving force behind Romanos's storytelling is thus to recount the stories in order to understand the motives, thoughts, and emotions behind the actions of biblical characters better and to enable a meeting with Christ as the Word in Scripture. Furthermore, this exegetical endeavour is closely connected with the zeal to emulate the characters in the biblical stories as models of piety, as Krueger has pointed out.[81] As we have seen, many of these characters go through a process of recognition, from an initial state of misunderstanding to full understanding and revelation. As with the disciples in the *kontakion* "On the Ascension", even the persons most closely connected to Christ fail to recognize him as truly God, before they are given some sort of token. By imitating these characters, Romanos invites his audience to go through a similar thought process in order to recognize Christ as God. Seen in this perspective, dramatic narratives with recognition are a didactic tool to unlock the mysteries of the Bible and facilitate a meeting with the divine.[82]

[78] SC 19, st. 4, 1: Τί οὖν διδάσκει ἡ βίβλος.

[79] SC 20, st. 4, 1: Τί δὲ λέγει κατίδωμεν σπουδαίως τῷ λεπρῷ ὁ Χριστὸς προσελθόντι.

[80] SC 21, st. 4, 1–2: Τὴν φρένα δὲ τῆς σοφῆς ἐρευνῆσαι ἤθελον / καὶ γνῶναι πῶς ἔλαμψεν ἐν αὐτῇ ὁ Κύριος.

[81] See especially Krueger 2005, 292, and idem 2014, 44–64.

[82] I should like to thank the Carlsberg Foundation for generously supporting my research with a post-doctoral scholarship and the editors of this volume for inviting me to contribute with an article. I should also like to thank the anonymous peer reviewer who pointed out several useful suggestions for revising the first version of this article. Some of the sections in this article are adapted from my unpublished dissertation (Eriksen 2013), thoroughly revised and rewritten.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Aristotle, *Poetics*. Ed. tr. S. Halliwell. *The Loeb Classical Library* 199, Cambridge, MA 2005.

Homer, *Odyssey*. Ed. P. von der Mühll, *Homeri Odyssea*. Basel 1962.

Plato, *Republic*. Ed. J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 4. Oxford 1968 [1902]

Romanos Melodos, *Hymnes*. Ed. tr. J. Grosdidier de Matons, *Romanos le Mélode. Hymnes*. Sources Chrétiennes, 5 vols. Paris 1964–1981.

Secondary sources

Barkhuizen, J. H. 1986. "Romanos Melodos: essay in the poetics of his kontakion 'Resurrection of Christ' (Maas-Trypanis 24)" *BZ* 79, 17–28; 268–81.

——— 1989. "Romanos Melodos and the composition of his hymns: prooimion and final strophe" *Hellenika* 40, 62–77.

Bouvy, E. 1886. *Poétes et mélodes: Étude sur les origins du rythme tonique et l'hymnographie de l'Église grecque*. Nîmes.

Carpenter, M. 1936. "Romanos and the mystery play of the east" *The University of Missouri Studies* 11/3, 20–51.

Constantinou, S. 2014. "Holy actors and actresses: fools and cross-dressers as the protagonists of Saints' Lives", in Efthymiadis (ed.) 2014, 345–64.

Constas, N. 2002. "The Last Temptation of Satan: divine deception in Greek patristic interpretations of the Passion narrative" *Greek Orthodox Theological Review* 47, 237–74.

Conomos, D. 2017. "Byzantine hymnody", *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology. Canterbury Press*. Available online at http://www.hymnology.co.uk/b/byzantine-hymnody (accessed 11 August 2017).

Culpepper, R. A. 1983. *Anatomy of the Fourth Gospel. A Study in Literary Design*. Philadelphia.

Cunningham, M. B. 2003. "Dramatic device or didactic tool? The function of dialogue in Byzantine preaching", in Jeffreys (ed.) 2003, 101–13.

de Jong, I. et al. (eds) 2004. *Narrators, Narratees, and Narratives in Ancient Greek Literature: Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative*, Mnemosyne, Leiden.

Duval, R. 1900. *Littérature syriaque*. Paris.

Easterling P. and E. Hall (eds) 2002. *Greek and Roman Actors. Aspects of an Ancient Profession*. Cambridge.

Efthymiadis, S. (ed.) 2014. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography, vol. 2: Genres and Contexts*. Aldershot.

Eriksen, U. H. 2010. "The poet in the pulpit: drama and rhetoric in the kontakion 'On the Victory of the Cross' by Romanos Melodos" *Transfiguration* 2010/2011, 103–23.

——— 2013. *Drama in the Kontakia of Romanos the Melodist: A Narratological Analysis of Four Kontakia, Graduate School of Arts*. Unpublished dissertation, Aarhus University.

Finnern, S. 2014. "Narration in religious discourse: the example of Christianity", in LHN: (accessed 11 August 2017).

Genette, G. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Tr. J. E. Lewin. New York.

——— 1997. *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree*. Stages 8, Lincoln, NE.

Grosdidier de Matons, J. 1964–81. *Romanos le Mélode. Hymnes*. Sources Chrétiennes 99; 110; 114; 128; 283, Paris.

——— 1977. *Romanos le Mélode et les origines de la poésie religieuse à Byzance*. Paris.

Halliwell, S. 2012. "Diegesis/Mimesis", in LHN (accessed 11 August 2017).

Heller, J. L. (ed.) 1974. *Serta Turyniana: Studies in Greek Literature and Palaeography in Honor of Alexander Turyn*. Urbana.

Herman, D. 2007. "Introduction" in Herman (ed.) 2007, 3–21.

——— (ed.) 2007. *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge Companions to Literature. Cambridge.

Herman, D., et al. (eds) 2008. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Oxford.

Harvey, S. A. and D. G. Hunter (eds) 2008. *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*. Oxford.

Jeffreys, E. (ed.) 2003. *Rhetoric in Byzantium: Papers from the Thirty-Fifth Spring Symposium of Byzantine Studies, Exeter College, University of Oxford, March 2001*. SPBS 11, Aldershot, Hants.

Kecskeméti, J. 1993. "Doctrine et drame dans le prédication grecque" *Euphrosyne* 21, 29–68.

Koder, J. 2005. *Romanus Melodus. Die Hymnen I*. Bibliothek der Griechischen Literatur. Stuttgart.

Krueger, D. 2004. *Writing and Holiness. The Practice of Authorship in the Early Christian East.* Philadelphia.

——— 2005. "Christian piety and practice in the sixth century", in Maas (ed.) 2005, 291–315.

——— 2014. *Liturgical Subjects. Christian Ritual, Biblical Narrative, and the Formation of the Self in Byzantium*. Philadelphia.

Kukkonen, K. 2014. "Plot", in LHN (accessed 11 August 2017).

La Piana, G. 1971 [1912]. *Le Rappresentazioni sacre nella letteratura bizantina.* Variorum Reprints, London.

——— 1936. "The Byzantine theatre" *Speculum* 11, 171–211.

Larsen, K. B. 2008. *Recognizing the Stranger. Recognition Scenes in the Gospel of John*. Biblical Interpretation Series 93, Leiden.

——— (ed.) 2015. *The Gospel of John as Genre Mosaic*. Göttingen.

Lash, E. 1995. *St. Romanos the Melodist, Kontakia. On the Life of Christ*, The Sacred Literature Series. New York.

Lausberg, H. 1960. *Handbuch der Literarischen Rhetorik: Eine Grundlegung der Literaturwissenschaft,* 2 vols. München.

LHN = *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Eds P. Hühn, P. et al. Hamburg. 2013 [2009]: http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de

Maas, M. (ed.) 2005. *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Justinian*. Cambridge.

Maas, P. and C. A. Trypanis 1963. *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Genuina*. Oxford.

——— 1970. *Sancti Romani Melodi Cantica: Cantica Dubia*. Oxford.

McGuckin, J. A. 2008. "Poetry and hymnography (2): the Greek world", in Harvey and Hunter (eds) 2008, 140–65.

Phelan, J. 2007. "Rhetoric/ethics" in Herman (ed.) 2007, 203–16.

Pier, J. 2016. "Metalepsis" in LHN (accessed 1 February 2017).

Pitra, J. B. 1876. *Analecta Sacra, Spicilegio solesmensi parata*. Paris.

Puchner, W. 2002. "Acting in the Byzantine theatre: evidence and problems", in Easterling and Hall (eds) 2002, 304–24.

Schork, R. 1966. "Dramatic dimension in Byzantine hymns" *Studia Patristica 6.* Texte und Untersuchungen 93, 271–79.

——— 1995. *Sacred Song from the Byzantine Pulpit. Romanos the Melodist.* Gainesville, FL.

Schroeder, M. 2004. "Romanus the Melodist: drama as an instrument of theology" *Logos*, 203–51.

Tomadakes, N. 1974. "Romanus Melodus and the Greek tragedians", in Heller (ed.) 1974, 401–9.

Troelsgård, C. 2011. *Byzantine Neumes: A New Introduction to the Middle Byzantine Musical Notation*. Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae. Subsidia 9, Copenhagen.

White, A. W. 2015. *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*. Cambridge.

7

A 'EUCHOLOGIC' NARRATIVE IN BYZANTIUM? TOWARDS A NARRATOLOGICAL APPROACH TO KASSIA'S FEMALE LITURGICAL POETRY

Laura Borghetti

Das Märchen ist gleichsam der Kanon der Poesie.
Alles Poetische muß märchenhaft sein.
(Novalis, *Fragmente*)

The art of telling tales has always played a key role in aggregating people who share a common background in terms of language and tradition. The heritage of tales and anecdotes consists of many different kinds of textual forms: mythical stories, fairy tales, edifying or historical narratives, to name but a few. All of these were first transmitted orally and then later in writing. They thus constituted an essential component of the background of ethnic and multi-ethnic identities. Byzantine storytelling is no exception, for it displays a variety of different genres, ranging from hagiography and historiography to the novels of the twelfth century.[1] This variety should be ascribed both to the Byzantines' creativity and to the immense heritage of previous literary cultures. Of course, none of these genres can be interpreted as an isolated art form. Rather, the techniques of one genre can be transferred to another and be used with surprising effects. As an example of this 'blending of genres', I should like to point to the role narrative aspects can play in seemingly non-narrative texts, such as Kassia's liturgical hymns.

Before approaching the analysis of Kassia's poems, I shall introduce, in a few lines, her life and personality. According to historiographical sources, Kassia was a Constantinopolitan aristocrat in the first half of the ninth century.[2] If one could choose three adjectives to describe her figure and personality, they would be: beautiful, well-read,

[1] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010, 271–74.

[2] Monographs essential to approaching Kassia's personality and her literary works are: Krumbacher 1897, Rochow 1967 and, more recently, Sherry 2013. A fundamental contribution to the study of Kassia's biography is Lauxtermann 1998.

audacious. Kassia is indeed described by ancient sources as very beautiful.[3] She was so attractive, in fact, that the emperor Theophilos initially chose her as his bride during his bride-show.[4] Furthermore, thanks to the epistles that the monk Theodore Stoudites wrote to Kassia, we know that she was an extraordinarily educated young woman, according to Theodore's praises of her literary style.[5] Lastly, the poetess was rather audacious and enterprising: as Theodore also reports in his letters, Kassia seems to have taken active part in the iconoclastic controversy, and after fulfilling her childhood dream of becoming a nun, she finally founded her own monastery.[6]

Kassia's literary production consists of both a series of moral sentences – *gnomai* – that deal with human vices and virtues, norms that regulate the life inside a monastery, and a corpus of religious hymns dedicated to male and female saints and to Christian holy days. In a historical phase such as second iconoclasm and the years immediately following, which still present several quandaries and issues connected to the reliability of historiographical data and textual transmission, Kassia embodies a highly interesting literary case. While actively participating in the events of her historical and social context, she was not only the sole female voice of her time – amongst the ones that have been passed on by tradition – but also a composer, whose concise, dynamic and evocative style reflects the theological and liturgical changes of those years.

In this paper, I have chosen to focus on Kassia's hymns with female saints as main figures because – despite the issues concerning their textual tradition and attribution

[3] Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicle*, PG 109, 685C: Τῆς δὲ μητρός αὐτοῦ Εὐφροσύνης βουληθείης δοῦναι αὐτῷ γυναῖκα, ἄγει κόρας διαφόρους ἀσυγκρίτους τῷ κάλλει, μεθ' ὧν μία τις ἐξ αὐτῶν κόρη ὡραιοτάτη ὑπῆρχεν Εἰκασία λεγομένη (His mother Euphrosyne wanting to give him a wife, brought before him various maidens of incomparable beauty, among whom was a certain maiden in the flower of beauty called Eikasia; tr. Sherry 2013, 121).

[4] For a more extensive description of Theophilos's bride-show, see further below and n. 89 for further bibliographical references.

[5] In his Ep. 370, Theodore praises Kassia's decorum (κοσμιότης) in writing, that resounds (ἐφθέγξατο) at once with knowledge and intelligence (ὁμοῦ μὲν σοφά, ὁμοῦ δὲ καὶ συνετά); see Epistles 501 Fatouros.

[6] Kassia's participation in the iconoclastic controversy is attested in Theodore's Ep. 217, where he praises Kassia for helping the monk Dorotheos and joining him in his battle towards martyrdom (συμμερίζῃ γὰρ ἐν τούτῳ τὸν τῆς ἀθλήσεως αὐτοῦ ἀγῶνα). In the same letter (217), Theodore also notes that Kassia's calling to the monastic life dates back to her childhood (παιδιόθεν); see Epistles 339 Fatouros. Proof of Kassia's foundation of her own monastery can be found in the Patria Constantinopoleos 276 Präger: Ἡ μονὴ τὰ Εἰκασίας ἐκτίσθη παρὰ Εἰκασίας μοναχῆς εὐλαβεστάτης καὶ σεβασμίας γυναικός, ὡραίας τῷ εἴδει (The monastery of Eikasia was founded by Eikasia the most pious nun and most revered woman, beautiful to behold; tr. Sherry 2013, 129).

– in these poems Kassia's literary skills as female composer perfectly match her poetical subjects, holy women.[7]

The narratological approach I have mainly applied in my analysis of Kassia's texts derives from Vladimir Propp's *The Morphology of the Folktale*.[8] The similar popular origin of both Russian fairy tales and hagiographical narrations allowed me to attempt an application of Propp's structures to Kassia's poetical handling of hagiographical material. The aim of this article is to observe and analyse, from a narratological perspective, how hagiographical characteristics affect Kassia's hymnographical texts. Furthermore, several aspects concerning gender theories and dramatic pattern will be examined within the narratological structure of Kassia's poems in order to highlight the many-sided nature of her work.

NARRATIVE SEQUENCE AND HAGIOGRAPHICAL NARRATION

By narration, I mean every communicative act which shows events told through a precise mediation tool ('communicative medium') and with a particular point of view. Also, a narration should be structured according to strict temporal and causal connections.[9] *Stricto sensu,* these criteria can be applied not only to narrative fiction. Indeed, they can also be applied to poetry, provided that it shows sequences organized by a diachronic logic. Although narrative fiction and poetry are to be distinguished in terms of formal criteria and, as we shall see, of content, a poem can tell a story. As Emmanuel Bourbouhakis and Ingela Nilsson have observed, narration should not be considered as a genre *per se* but as an expressive modality through which some literary genres tell stories, real or fictional, according to precise textual patterns.[10]

A fundamental characteristic of narrative fiction is a rigorous respect for temporal and causal connections. As such, it is impossible to change the order of the episodes, because doing so would change the story line's development and the overall logic of the narrated plot. With regards to fairy tales, Vladimir Propp, in his *Morphology of the Folktale,* is rigorous: "the sequence of functions is always identical".[11] By function, Propp means the action/reaction to which the character is subjugated. This means that if we designate with the letter A a function encountered everywhere in first position, and similarly designate with the letter B the function which (if it is at all present) *always*

[7] A wide albeit still preliminary investigation about the manuscript tradition and the attribution issues of Kassia's hymns has been conducted in Rochow 1967, 34–58.

[8] Propp 1958.

[9] Hühn 2013, 1.

[10] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010, 264–65.

[11] Propp 1958, 20.

follows A, then all functions known to the tale will arrange themselves within a *single* tale, and none will fall out of order, nor will anyone exclude or contradict any other.[12]

If we apply the same observations to hagiographical narration, it may be acknowledged that the narrative functions which constitute the *Lives* of saints are in compliance with a recurring outline. This outline includes, for example, early manifestations of holiness in the protagonist, the sacrifice of worldly goods and ties, the eventual self-imposed exile from society, and the adoption of an ascetic way of life in order to purify the soul. The temporal and causal sequence of these functions is never subverted.[13]

However, in the very last stages of life, especially the life of a holy martyr, which is the period of detention and execution – namely the description of various agonies and of a likely divine intervention – the narration becomes remarkably episodic, with a weaker connection between events in terms of chronology.[14] Each of them seems to have a sort of internal unity that would hypothetically allow them to exist out of context. Therefore, the order of events could be twisted without having any consequences for the overall narration. Furthermore, the diachronic dimension of this section of hagiographical tales becomes less important, because the narrative time contracts and expands according to the educational range of the episode.[15] The structure of the martyrdom phase in the *Lives* can therefore be defined as a narrative form consisting of composition, not of development.[16] This variation of the sequential narrative rhythm would seem to follow in the footsteps of the Gospel description of the Passion of Christ. As Sönke Finnern claims in his study on religious narration, the Gospels are to be seen as a sort of tragedy, in which the main conflict between Christ and the Jewish authorities is steadily exacerbated in the course of the narration, while the narrative rhythm slightly decreases during the Passion, culminating in the crucifixion.[17] Passions of holy men seem to follow the same pattern.

Just as there is a parallel to be found in the narrative structure of the passions of Christ and holy martyrs, so too we may find another parallel: the sequence of those Gospel episodes which have Christ as their main character mirrors the episodic nature of the *Lives* of saints. Indeed, each of these episodes has its own structural self-sufficiency. On the one hand, this self-sufficiency makes them independent from each other as far as the sequence of events is concerned. On the other hand, they are connected to

[12] Ibid., 21.
[13] Bourbouhakis & Nilsson 2010, 269
[14] Ibid., 269.
[15] Ibid., 263.
[16] Ibid., 269.
[17] Finnern 2014, 4.

each other as true ‘tales into a/within a tale’. Finnern has brought to light four recurring narrative functions: 1) Jesus travels and meets a person; 2) This person either does something or asks Jesus a question; 3) Jesus either answers or works miracles; 4) the reaction of people surrounding them. These four functions cannot be interchanged. However, a change in the chronological order of each one of these evangelical episodes does not seem to create logical inconsistencies, provided that they anticipate the passion.[18]

Given the ‘episodic nature’ of this specific section of hagiographical narration, we could define it as a ‘store’ of brief tales which are connected to each other through the leitmotif of the *Life*. The aim of this narration is to give an *exemplum*, making the hagiographical tale a *historia animae utilis*. The story of the main character, with its promises of eternal deliverance, must serve the faithful as an exemplary model for conduct of life. This narrative function is by no means limited to the Gospels or the *Lives* of saints; on the contrary, similar narrative structures can be found in the Old Testament, where the characters are *paradeigmata* in matter of faith, behaviour and experiences. To conclude, it may be acknowledged that the principal aim of religious narration is to stimulate readers to live according to divine principles. Therefore, the ‘real’ narration is subordinate and acts as frame to an *a priori* truth.

HYMNOGRAPHY AND HAGIOGRAPHY

The branch of Byzantine hymnography which tells of the lives of saints, on the one hand, and hagiography itself on the other, is a combination of two genres that are tightly connected. Because the content of the hymns is based on the content of hagiographic texts, they are, as a matter of course, classified as hagiographic hymnography or synaxarial verses.[19] It was usual in the course of composing a hymn for the hymnographer to cite *vitae* and *passiones*, often quoting them directly.[20] Karl Krumbacher offered a particularly critical judgment when he analysed hymns of this type. In his study of two canons dedicated to Theodosius the Cenobiarch, whose author used as direct source the saint’s *Life* written by Theodore, archbishop of Petra in the first half of the sixth century, Krumbacher referred to these hymns as “geschmacklos versifizierte Heiligenbiographien”.[21] In his view, these were undiscriminating, almost mechanical, translations and so the hagiographic texts were forced into a poetic form. Moving forward to more recent points of view, however, the weight and the value of literary imitation in

[18] Finnern 2014, 4.
[19] Giannouli 2014, 265.
[20] Ibid., 287–88.
[21] Krumbacher 1892, 322.

the development of each culture's textual heritage are huge. As Ingela Nilsson observes, imitation is "the means by which tradition is shaped and transmitted in literary form. It is how different genres are established, developed and transformed".[22] Thanks to the thematic and sometimes even formal imitation of scriptural and hagiographical texts, in fact, we have the possibility and privilege to read – and, owing to their oral and musical dimension – to listen to hymnographic works such as Romanos the Melodist's *kontakia*, or the *Golden Kanon* of John of Damascus.[23]

Nevertheless, Kassia's *troparia* clearly distinguish themselves from the hymns that Krumbacher referred to in his work.[24] The metrical form of Kassia's hymns, in fact, does not allow for a mechanical translation of the hagiographic text into verse owing to the brevity of each hymn and the composer's lyrical traits, such as her particularly concise style and the selection of an incisive and effective terminology. The *troparion*, in fact, is much shorter than the *kontakion* and the canon, and it is suitable for the characteristics of composition and expression used by Kassia.[25] In most contexts she employs a particularly simple and pithy style, as well as a forceful and sometimes even trenchant terminology.[26] She does, however, avoid appealing to an explicit realism in her descriptions and prefers metaphors and allegory that are related to *topoi* with reference to the natural world. These *topoi* do not evoke a physical image of torment or a committed sin, but rather its emotional or spiritual capacity.

A compelling illustration of these *topoi* is present in the *Hymn to Saint Pelagia* which narrates the *metanoia* of a harlot who renounced her immoral lifestyle and retired in repentance to a grotto in the Jerusalem desert.[27] Kassia describes this in two practical descriptive narrations that are different yet equally evocative. The first one is a quote from Saint Paul's letter to the Romans,[28] found in the first two verses of the *Hymn to Saint Pelagia*:

[22] Nilsson 2010, 195.

[23] The *kontakion* is a poetic form that consists of several stanzas – from eighteen to thirty, or even more – all structurally alike (Wellesz 1961, 179). For further information about the genesis, structure and main composers of the *kontakion*, see Wellesz 1961, 179–97 and 206–28. See also Eriksen in this volume.

[24] The *troparion* was – in its earliest stage – a short euchologic compositions in poetic prose recited after each verse of a psalm. The single stanza of a *kontakion* is also called *troparion*. For a more detailed description of the *troparion* see Wellesz 1961, 171–79.

[25] The kanōn is a structured hymn consisting of nine odes (ᾠδαί) based on the nine canticles from the scriptures. For its origin, structure and development, see Wellesz 1961, 198–245.

[26] Silvas 2006, 22.

[27] Kassia, *Menaia* 6–7 Tripolitis.

[28] Rom 5:20.

> Ὅπου ἐπλεόνασεν ἡ ἁμαρτία,
> ὑπερεπερίσσευσεν ἡ χάρις[29]
>
> Wherever sin has become excessive,
> grace has abounded even more

Kassia quotes this Pauline epistle in order to describe the existing direct proportional relationship between the consequence of sin and the immense grace that is received through penance. In all probability, she chose this citation from the New Testament for two reasons. First, Kassia would have been almost certain that the quote would be understood by the listener because at that time biblical literature played an integral part in the life of all believers. Secondly, she probably intended to take advantage of the strong emotional impact the scriptures had on their public. In verse 5, Kassia mentions Saint Pelagia's sins once again:

> τῶν πολλῶν πταισμάτων τὸ πέλαγος ἐξήρανας[30]
> you have dried up the sea of copious sins

She does not speak of their severity specifically, but highlights and recalls the severity of Saint Pelagia's shame by using a metaphor of nature, that is, an allegory referring to the dark depth of the open sea. Returning to Krumbacher's considerations, it is interesting to note that the same metaphor is used in the *Life of Pelagia*.[31] Kassia, however, chose to turn the recurring term τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν, which is a direct quote of the hagiographic source, into τῶν πταισμάτων: this second *lemma* proves to be quite less frequently connected to πέλαγος and, therefore, gains a stronger effect in evoking Pelagia's shame.

In terms of narration the fundamental differences between hagiography and hagiographic hymnography go beyond the structural and stylistic criteria. In fact, the two genres are radically different and have different literary objectives. If the cornerstone of hagiography is to provide an exemplum, that is to say a model of action for the devout, then in the case of hagiographic hymns, the *exemplum* is not the solution but the means. The exemplary daily behaviour of honoured *personae* serves to legitimize their sanctification and, consequently, their ability to intercede with God to save the faithful. A euchologic motive for intercession is therefore the thread that guides the translation of hagiographic legends into verse.

[29] Kassia, *Menaia* 6–7 Tripolitis. Translations of Kassia's verses are based on Tripolitis 1972, although with slight changes.

[30] Kassia, *Menaia* 6–7 Tripolitis.

[31] *Life of Pelagia* 24, 173–74.

NARRATIVE VOICE IN KASSIA'S HYMNS

I shall open my analysis of the narratological framework in Kassia's hymns with some remarks about the voice of the narrator, which in Kassia's hymns proves to be rather varied. Kassia, in fact, is both author and narrator and, furthermore, is classified as the narratorial voice of the text. This is evident from the multiple times she addresses directly not only the saints, but also Christ himself. One can note this in the hymn she dedicates to Saint Christina. Kassia speaks directly to Christ by referring to him as having helped the saint in her martyrdom by using the miraculous power of the Cross.

> Ἐθαυματούργησε, Χριστέ,
> τοῦ σταυροῦ σου ἡ δύναμις
> ὅτι καὶ Χριστίνα ἡ μάρτυς
> ἀθλητικὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγωνίσατο[32]
>
> Christ, the power of your cross
> has done miracles
> when Christina the martyr
> also contended in mighty contest.

In these four verses, it is the second person pronoun *σου* and the vocative Χριστέ that witness to Kassia's participation in the narrative context, just as if she were participating in the narrative events herself. The use of the second person singular, even more than the personal pronoun *σου*, places the hagiographic narration into a dimension of discourse where the poet converses directly with the saint. It is significant to note that in this case, in the two verses that open the *Hymn to Saint Thecla*, Kassia applauds the saint's choice to refuse a secular marriage, preferring instead a celestial union with Christ.

> Νυμφίον ἔχουσα ἐν οὐρανοῖς Χριστὸν
> τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν,
> νυμφῶνος κατεφρόνησας τοῦ ἐπιγείου
> καὶ μνηστῆρος[33]
>
> Because you had a bridegroom in heaven, Christ our God,
> you rejected the bride-chamber and the earthly suitor

These two verses use the first person plural ἡμῶν, which is another relevant element Kassia uses to sketch her role as narrator. The usual role the narrator holds, which is primarily in the first person singular, is diminished here.[34] This creates an individuality, which, while remaining implicit, plays a subordinate role in the collective sense of the

[32] Kassia, *Menaia* 58–59 Tripolitis.

[33] Kassia, *Menaia* 4–5 Tripolitis.

[34] In this regard, see Campbell 2010, dealing with the use of verbal persons in Thucydides, Polybius, Flavius Josephus and in the Acts of the Apostles.

first person plural. Therefore, it allows the reader to feel involved through the pluralism of 'us'.[35]

In Kassia's writings, the choice of the first person plural reveals her determination to fulfil her euchologic goal. In the majority of cases, the first person plural is found in the final verses of the hymns where you would usually find expressions of the supplication to the saint. This positioning is not at all casual. Kassia's intention is to involve the reader in the community of the faithful who sought salvation. At the same time, however, Kassia also presents herself as being, herself, integral to this same community of the devout. Also symbolic is the following expression from the *Hymn to Saint Christina*.

> πρεσβεύεις ὑπὲρ τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν
> You intercede on behalf of our souls

Here, the verb πρεσβεύω is the key term in passing from the narrative context to the truly euchologic one. We shall return to this specific term below.[36]

According to this last verse, if we follow Gérard Genette's classification, Kassia even seems to be definable as both *intradiegetic* and *extradiegetic* narrator. On the one hand, in fact, she turns directly to the characters of her hymns – namely the female saints while addressing her supplications to them – and, on the other hand, she speaks on behalf of the public – namely the members of the religious community, to which she also belongs. Not only this, but Kassia also sets herself as *homodiegetic* narrator, by becoming a character of the account she is telling through the use of the first person plural pronoun ἡμῶν.[37] As *homodiegetic* narrator Kassia can be also defined as *communal voice*, according to Susan Lanser's classification, a sort of collective voice, "the voice of a single individual who is manifestly authorized by a community", in this case the Christian faithful.[38]

Clear signs of Kassia's presence as intradiegetic narrator are not always present in her hymns. In the *Hymn to Saint Barbara*, for example, she never uses the first or second person, nor does she speak directly to a character. At times, there are almost imperceptible signs of her presence, which show the narrator's inclination to not be completely objective in regards to what is happening at that moment.[39] This brings Kassia's involvement forward, even if only as an emotion. In the first verse of the *Hymn to Saint Barbara*, the adjective ἐχθρός speculates on the narrator's personal opinion as well as the adverb ἀξίως, which indicates Kassia's acceptance of the saint's coronation.

[35] Campbell 2010, 404.
[36] Kassia, *Menaia* 4–7 and 56–57 Tripolitis.
[37] Genette 1972 (1980), 244–49; Niederhoff 2011, 5.
[38] Lanser 1992, 21.
[39] Margolin 2014, 10–11.

v. 1: Ἠισχύνθη ὁ Βάσκανος ἐχθρός
v. 9: Χριστὸς ὁ στεφανώσας ἀξίως, | Βαρβάραν τὴν Μάρτυρα[40]

v. 1: The Devil has been dishonoured
v. 9: Christ rightfully crowned Barbara the Martyr

All of these almost imperceptible indicators show us that the composer is, in effect, taking advantage of immersing herself in the text. This is essential for the *captatio benevolentiae* of the saint. The celebration of the characters in the hymn is in fact strictly functional in terms of the intent to have a euchologic finale.

There can be more than one narrative voice within the same narration.[41] The first is the primary voice under which all the other voices take a hierarchical position but still recall the events that the primary narrator is speaking of, in a sort of *narrational parataxis*. Didier Coste observes that narrational parataxis occurs "when the fabula or story is actually constructed into narrative matter by the very division of labor between 'parallel' narrators placed at similar levels of subordination".[42] This kind of connection among different narrative voices comes under the form of *multiperspectivity* that Manfred Pfister defines as "closed": a different focalisation of the narration that, nonetheless, does not damage the coherence of the account of the story.[43] The main function of the recourse to multiperspectivity is foregrounding the object of the narration, endorsing and repeating meaningful events or statements: "forcing the reader into a much closer scrutiny of the text" actually matches the edifying goal of the hagiographical tales and hymns.[44]

Minor narrators often become messengers of the primary voice and, in a Christian context, are embodied by angels. A peculiarity of these minor narrators is their ability to report not only past events but also future ones.[45] It is in this respect important to note the presence of angels in Kassia's hymns. In the *Hymn to Saint Christina*, the angels of the chorus, in verses 13 through 16, announce the saint's victory and her coronation.[46] In the hymn dedicated to Saint Agatha, in verses 9 and 10, an angel takes the

[40] Kassia, *Menaia* 50–53 Tripolitis.
[41] Margolin 1991, 518–19.
[42] Coste 1989, 173.
[43] Pfister 1993, 67; Hartner 2012, 2.
[44] Hutchinson 1984, 35; Nünning & Nünning 2000, 28–31.
[45] Cf. the various biblical Annunciations: in Gen 18:1–5; 6:11–14, for example, three angels announce to Abraham and Sarah Isaac's forthcoming birth, while in Judg 13:2–5 Manoach receives a prediction of his son Samson's imminent arrival. In the New Testament, it is worth comsidering the different modalities with which the forthcoming birth of Christ is announced to Mary: Matt 1:18–25 and Luke 1:26–37.
[46] Kassia, *Menaia* 58–59 Tripolitis.

role of divine ambassador and carries an epitaph about Agatha to her tomb, written directly by God himself:

> "Νοῦς ὅσιος, αὐτοπροαίρετος,
> τιμὴ ἐκ Θεοῦ, καὶ πατρίδος λύτρωσις"
>
> "Holy mind, possessed of free choice,
> Honour from God, and deliverance of the country" [47]

This inscription on the tablet states the courage and resolve Agatha had in her faith. It speaks of the salvation she gained for herself and for her homeland through her martyrdom. Here Kassia skilfully communicates the saint's events in the two final verses, while conveying them in a prophetic tone and clear language. As Marcus Hartner rightly states, "such 'closed' forms [of multiperspectivity] seem to be particularly suited to stage the relative or limited nature of individual viewpoints, while at the same time creating a dominant voice that provides an authoritative account of the narrated events", and which here is provided by the combination of Kassia's voice and the Angel's divine epitaph.[48]

FEMALE CHARACTERIZATION IN KASSIA'S HYMNS

When looking into Kassia's narratological framework regarding female characters, we can observe several recurring events and particularities within the distribution of roles among the different characters. These aspects require further investigation and Propp's *Morphology of the Folktale*, together with the theories of other literary scholars, such as Algirdas J. Greimas's *Structural Semantics* (to which I shall return below), offers interesting guidelines. Since Propp analysed fairy tales through reducing them into minimal elements, it remains to be demonstrated that it is possible to adopt this same approach – within limits of course – when analysing Kassia's use of hagiographic matter in her hymns. Considering Propp's distinction among the several functions of the characters, I should like to make a brief examination of the subdivision of themes within each singular component used by Kassia in composing her hymns.

Propp uses the term hero when speaking of the character that is the protagonist. The hero is in conflict with one or more villains and is almost always aided by a helper who will follow him in his struggle, in most cases in order to save a princess.[49] The finale is often the wedding of the hero with the princess. Because the hymns of Kassia selected here are dedicated to female figures, the protagonist is our heroine – the saint, and the role of the princess is transformed into a male character. In the majority of cases the

[47] Kassia, *Menaia* 42–43 Tripolitis.
[48] Hartner 2012, 2.
[49] Propp 1958, 72–75.

princess corresponds with the figure of Christ. This does not mean that Christ needs to be 'saved' like the princess, but rather, it is the saint who is saved through her celestial union with Christ. Interesting examples can be observed in the following verses:

Hymn to Saint Thecla, v. 1:

> Νυμφίον ἔχουσα ἐν οὐρανοῖς Χριστὸν τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν[50]
>
> Because you had a bridegroom in heaven, Christ our God.

Hymn to Saint Eudokia, v. 4:

> προσῆλθε τοῦ νυμφευθῆναί σοι, Χριστέ[51]
>
> She came to be wed to you, Christ

Hymn to Saint Christina, vv. 34–35:

> ὁ βασιλεὺς τῆς δόξης, Χριστός,
> ὡς ἀμώμητόν σε νύμφην ἑαυτῷ ἡρμόσατο συναφείᾳ ἀκηράτῳ[52]
>
> The King of Glory, Christ,
> Joined you to him as an unblemished bride in a pure union

Going back to the second verse of the *Hymn to Saint Thecla*, it is the only one where the villain is clearly defined:

> Νυμφίον ἔχουσα ἐν οὐρανοῖς Χριστὸν
> τὸν θεὸν ἡμῶν,
> νυμφῶνος κατεφρόνησας τοῦ ἐπιγείου
> καὶ μνηστῆρος[53]
>
> Because you had a bridegroom in heaven, Christ our God.
> You rejected the bride-chamber and the earthly suitor

The young maiden, indeed, rejects her earthly suitor because she desires a celestial union with Christ. The suitor is here explicitly identified by the word μνηστήρ, which is a direct reference to the hagiographic source of the hymn, recalling also Homer's *Odyssey* where the suitors are Penelope's main antagonists.[54] In the Saint Christina hymn, on the other hand, the word describing the villain is the slightly less direct τύραννος, meaning tyrant, at verse 5 and 22.[55] This tyrant is probably the state authority that

[50] Kassia, *Menaia* 4–5 Tripolitis.
[51] Kassia, *Menaia* 44–45 Tripolitis.
[52] Kassia, *Menaia* 60–61 Tripolitis.
[53] Kassia, *Menaia* 4–5 Tripolitis.
[54] Homer, *Odyssey* 1.107 and in over 200 further loci.
[55] Kassia, *Menaia* 56–57 Tripolitis.

orders the saint's martyrdom or the Devil himself, as well as δαίμων, or demon, at verse 30 – it represents an evil entity like the Βάσκανος at verse 1 of the *Hymn to Saint Barbara*, which properly means the Devil:

> τύραννον οὐκ ἐπτοήθησαν, τὸν δόλιον κατεπάτησαν
> γενναίως ἀντέστης κατὰ τῶν τυράννων
> τῶν δαιμόνων τὰς πανουργίας κατήργησας ἐνθέως
> Ἠισχύνθη ὁ Βάσκανος ἐχθρός[56]
>
> They were not frightened by the oppressor, but trampled the deceiver.
> She bravely withstood the oppressors
> Divinely defeated the evilness of the demons
> The Devil has been dishonoured

Each character carries one or more functions, which are easily identifiable in Kassia's hymns. For the villain, Propp assigns the function of villainy and of the heroine's struggles with a recurring vocabulary, which belongs to the agonistic lexical field, as can be seen at v. 20 of the Saint Christina hymn:[57]

> ἀθλητικὸν ἀγῶνα ἠγωνίσατο
>
> Also contended in mighty contest.

We see in Saint Thecla that the function of villainy corresponds to the obligation that dictates the saint's abandonment of her Christian faith. If we take a look at v. 2 of the Saint Thecla hymn, we see how the heroine manages, nevertheless, to resist her mother's attempt on her faith:

> ταῖς γὰρ μητρώαις θωπείαις εὐφρόνως μὴ πεισθεῖσα[58]
>
> You were rightfully not persuaded by your mother's coaxing

The role of the helper is not easily detected in the narrative context of these hymns. If we consider Propp's hypothesis that one character can be active in different functions, it is possible to individualize the role of helper in the figure of Christ.[59] Thus, Christ is the helper and at the same time also the princess in the saint's spiritual conflict.

Christ, nonetheless, in the role of helper does not personally act as an actual person but as the Logos or as the symbolic divine cross. This may also depend on the principle of Christ's unrepresentability, widespread during the iconoclastic era: instead of Christ's very person, we find his ὑποστάσεις, such as spiritual virtues, the cross or the

[56] Kassia, *Menaia* 12–13 Tripolitis.
[57] Kassia, *Menaia* 58–59 Tripolitis.
[58] Kassia, *Menaia* 4–5 Tripolitis.
[59] Propp 1958, 73.

Logos.[60] You can observe this in both the Saint Barbara and the Saint Christina hymns. Here the cross is placed alongside weapons, such as a sword that the saint grasps in her hands as she walks forcefully along the road to salvation:

> Λόγος τοῦ Πατρός [...] τὴν κάταραν ἔλυσε τῆς Εὔας καὶ τοῦ Ἀδά
> δυνάμει τοῦ σταυροῦ σου, φιλάνθρωπε·[61]
>
> The Logos of the Father [...] dissolved the curse of Eve and Adam
> By the power of your Cross, friend of mankind

In the context of the morphology of the tale, it is possible to individualize the different roles that helpers play, not only as physical beings but as objects as well. As noted above, a particularly significant helper is the cross and the role it plays. Kassia's hymns are full of these so-called magical objects, and the Saint Christina hymn, in particular, abounds with them. In verses 25 to 28 the saint, while in combat, is protected by a suit of armour, which represents her faith (*πίστις*), her shield represents hope (*ἔλπις*), the cross in her hand represents a weapon (*ὅπλον*) and her bow love (*ἀγάπη*).[62] These magical objects in the form of sacred weapons may also represent further Christ's *ὑποστάσεις* as helper.

The possibility for the helper to be both a living person and an inanimate item has been stated not only by Propp but also by later literary scholars as, for example, the semiotician Greimas. According to Greimas's *Structural Semantics,* in fact, the helper as *actant* can also be a lifeless element, as well as the *opponent*. In Greimas's opinion, the roles of helper and opponent, together with the *object* of the hero's search, can also be inanimate because they are not considered in their physiological essence, but respectively as aids, obstacles or incentives to the hero's actions.[63]

The specific case of Kassia's magical objects also seems to suit Jens Eder's four dimensions underlying a character particularly well (though Eder's analysis concerns films):

[60] Even though Theodore Stoudites had initially praised Kassia for her audacious defence of the holy images, her zealous participation in the iconoclastic controversy seems to become rather moderate later on (see Lauxtermann 1998, 396). In fact, according to Theodore's Ep. 539, Kassia chose not to provide the orthodox eucharist for an iconoclastic *stratēgos* on his deathbed, since this would have added him to the orthodox community (*ὥστ' ἂν εὑρεθῇ ἐν τῇ ὀρθοδόξῳ κοινωνίᾳ*, Epistles 814 Fatouros). Apparently, rumours had also started circulating about Kassia's true faith (*τὰς κατὰ σοῦ διαβολάς*; Epistles, in Fatouros 1907, 813). Furthermore, in the Saint Christina hymn, Kassia even seems to make an iconoclastic allusion by claiming *ὅτι καὶ γυναῖκες κατήργησαν τὴν πλᾶνην / τῆς εἰδωλομανίας* (since even women have repudiated the untruth of the idolatrous insanity; *Menaia* 57 Tripolitis). As we can see, owing to the conflicting nature of the clues deduced from both Kassia's works and the sources about her, modern research has not been able yet to define with certainty the orientation of Kassia's faith.

[61] Kassia, *Menaia* 12–13 and 60–61 Tripolitis.

[62] Kassia, *Menaia* 66–75 Tripolitis.

[63] Greimas 1971, 161–65; Jannidis 2012, 5.

each figure is, in fact, at the same time an artefact (*Artefakt*), that is to say how it is made; a fictional being (*Wesen*), namely the totality of features describing it; a symbol (*Symbol*), that is the meaning communicated through the character; and a symptom (*Symptom*), namely what effects the character's peculiarities have.[64] By taking the shield/hope (ἔλπις) as an example, its being an artefact describes its nature as a solid metal item; it is a fictional being inasmuch the holy woman holds it in order to protect herself from the villain's attacks; furthermore, Kassia openly declares it as a living symbol of hope; and finally, as symptom, it is supposed to work as an incentive for the readers – namely, the community of the faithful – in order to keep hope steady in misfortune. The possibility of describing Kassia's magical objects according to Eder's four dimensions allows us to define these items as proper characters acting in the narratological structure of the hymn.

Another important point of reflection about the narration of Kassia's hymns is established through the evolution from the hagiographic narration to the euchologic finale. In terms of narration, this passage is translated as an inversion of some characters' narrative roles. The saint, who was, until now, the heroine, becomes the helper. Her job is to come to the aid of the believers and intercede on their behalf to God. A member of the Christian community is, of course, also the composer herself, who demonstrates the fact that she is an integral part of it – as we saw above – through the use of the first person plural of verbs and pronouns. The believers and poetess became, therefore, the final protagonists of the hymn.

The textual signs that show an inversion of the narrative method are lexical and grammatical in nature. The verb πρεσβεύω – *intercede* – is one of the most significant in that it appears in many of the *troparia*. It is the key word, which leads into the euchologic dimension and that of the saint's narrative role change. An undeniable example of this is seen in verse 7 of the *Hymn to Saint Pelagia*:

> καί νῦν τούτῳ πρεσβεύεις ὑπὲρ
> τῶν ψυχῶν ἡμῶν[65]
>
> And now you intercede with him
> on behalf of our souls.

A variation of this same verb is found in the closing of the *Hymn to Saints Adrian and Natalia*, where, in the place of πρεσβεύω – *intercede*, ἱκετεύω – *supplicate* is used:

> Ἀλλ' ὦ ξυνωρὶς ἁγία,
> ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῷ Θεῷ ἱκετεύσατε[66]

[64] Eder 2008, 134–42.
[65] Kassia, *Menaia* 6–7 Tripolitis.
[66] Kassia, *Menaia* 70–71 Tripolitis.

But O holy couple,
Supplicate God on our behalf

Even in the hymns that do not use these particular verbs, there are similar signs that show an inverted euchologic narrative, and most of them are lexical. This inversion is evident in the *Hymn to Saint Eudokia* in verses 11 through 13, as can be seen below:

Καὶ ἀκούσω κἀγώ·
Ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε,
πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην.[67]

And I too will hear:
"Your faith has saved you,
Go into peace".

On the one hand, the use of the future tense in the wording communicates a sense of hope. On the other hand, the reference to the salvation that Christ gives the sinner when he anoints her feet demonstrates that the desired result of the worship is achieved. It is worth noticing, at verse 11, how Kassia is willing to highlight her personal participation in the upcoming process of salvation. In fact, not only does the poetess correlate the first person singular verb ἀκούσω with the corresponding (and redundant) pronoun *I* (ἐγώ), but she also adds the conjunction καὶ (in crasis with ἐγώ), so that the meaning of the pronoun appears even more emphatic. As a result, Kassia's role as newly arisen protagonist is highlighted as well: the process leading to the inverted euchologic narrative is now fulfilled.

It is also interesting to note the fitting construction Kassia utilizes once again to achieve the same finality in verses 8 and 9 in the *Hymn to Saint Mary the Egyptian*:

καὶ ἐβλάστησας ἡμῖν τῆς μετανοίας καρπούς
διό σου τὴν μνήμην, Ὁσία, ἑορτάζομεν.[68]

And you made to grow in us the seeds of repentance:
Therefore we celebrate your memory, holy one.

In the end Kassia proposes once again, along with the rest of the faithful, to celebrate the memory of the saint in the hope that the seeds of penance she left behind would grow within their hearts. This metaphor suggests the process *in itinere* that justifies the prayers to the saint.

Since Kassia's use of the first person singular and plural mostly occurs in the final verses of the hymns, as already stated above, the structure of the inverted euchologic narrative can be read as a specific kind of *metalepsis*. As described by Genette, in

[67] Kassia, *Menaia* 44–45 Tripolitis.
[68] Kassia, *Menaia* 48–49 Tripolitis.

fact, metalepsis means "any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe".[69] Therefore, Kassia as narrator, while being extradiegetic in the first section – the hagiographical one – of her hymns and mainly intradiegetic in the final verses – the proper euchologic ones – of the poems, seems to carry out a metalepsis, where the specifically narrative dimension leaps into the liturgical and euchologic reality.

A CASE STUDY: THE HYMN TO SAINTS NATALIA AND ADRIAN

In the hymn dedicated to Natalia and Adrian, the character framework presents special traits and the helper is once again an animated physical being, not an object. This is the only hymn dedicated to a female saintly figure in which the woman is not the protagonist. The hero is Adrian who heroically resists his own martyrdom. Natalia is the helper who dares to dress as a man so that, in verses 10 to 13, she may enter the prison where Adrian is kept in order to give him courage:

Πῶς τὸ θῆλυ ἠνδρίσατο
κατὰ τοῦ πικροῦ τυράννου,
καὶ τὸν ταύτης σύνευνον ἐνεύρωσε
μὴ ὑπενδοῦναι τοῖς δεινοῖς.[70]

How the woman turned into a man
Against the bitter tyrant,
And she encouraged her husband
Not to yield to the tortures

But, since Natalia's role as helper is ample and decisive in regards to narrative intent, she is also at times the lead heroine. An exchange of roles such as this has been analysed by Propp in his studies of similar situations. Propp stated that, and here I quote: "the hero often gets along without the aid of helpers (as though he were his own helper). [...] Conversely, a helper at times may perform those functions which are specifically intended for the hero."[71] It is important to note that it is impossible for each and every single character theorized by Propp to take part in all hymns. The position the character takes is at the discretion of the composer. This choice depends on the intent to create stability between narration and poetic rhythm.

Beside the narratological consequences concerning Natalia's exchange of roles, the anthropological and theological significance of the verb ἀνδρίζω in this hymn is worth a deeper analysis. Its literal meaning, according to LSJ, is "to make manly", "to play

[69] Genette 1972 (1980), 234–35.
[70] Kassia, *Menaia* 70–81 Tripolitis.
[71] Propp 1958, 75.

the man" and it directly recalls one of the Suda definitions of the same verb: ἀνδρίζω τὸ ἀνδρός τι ποιῶ ("to act like a man in a certain situation").[72] The "transferred" meaning of ἀνδρίζω, namely "to muster up the courage", "to resist", "to struggle", is the most widespread in the *lexica* and in the Bible. The Suda also reports ἄνδρα ἐπάλαισεν, "to wrestle like a man", while Hesychius classifies it as synonym of the verbs ἀπαμβρακόομαι and καρτέρεω, meaning "to resist", "to endure".[73] In the Psalms, ἀνδρίζω recurs twice in sort of "formulaic construction", in both singular and plural forms: ἀνδρίζου, καὶ κραταιούσθω ἡ καρδία σου, καὶ ὑπόμεινον τὸν κύριον ("be strong and take heart, and wait for the Lord") and ἀνδρίζεσθε, καὶ κραταιούσθω ἡ καρδία ὑμῶν, πάντες οἱ ἐλπίζοντες ἐπὶ κύριον. ("be strong and take heart, all you who hope in the Lord").[74] It seems clear how actions like "to muster up the courage" and "to endure" are strongly bound to having faith in God. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul of Tarsus links the form ἀνδρίζεσθε to several synonyms which also contribute in orienting its meaning to "showing strength".[75]

On the other hand, Kassia in verse 10 willingly chooses the rather literal meaning "to act like a man", which she links to the adjective θῆλυ, used here as a noun, namely "female being" in a proper biological sense (though applied in a strictly Christian context), instead of the more common γυνή, "woman".[76] This unusual and biologically oriented terminological choice is directly bound to Natalia's almost paradoxical intervention: in fact, she carries out sort of a transgender conversion by cutting her hair and wearing a male cloak. Despite the wide chronological gap and the huge difference concerning the cultural background, there is an affinity between Natalia's action and Christ's statement in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas:

> Simon Peter said to him, "Let Mary leave us, for women are not worthy of life." Jesus said, "I myself shall lead her in order to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven."[77]

In Matteo Grosso's opinion, Jesus's saying reflects an "androcentric" perspective which, however, turns into a complex concept where "male" and "female" categories transcend their purely biological and literal meaning. This is a wholly spiritual transformation which the two biological categories just allude to.[78] The resulting parallel and com-

[72] Suda 2170.
[73] Suda 372; Hesychius, *Lexikon* 5762.
[74] Ps 26:14 and 30:25.
[75] 1 Cor 16:13.
[76] Kassia, *Menaia* 70–71 Tripolitis.
[77] Apocryphal Gospel of Thomas 114, cited in Grosso 2011, 61.
[78] Grosso 2011, 261–62.

parison is interesting: even if the male status constitutes an unavoidable access-key, the merely biological aspect – namely the physical one – is essential in Natalia's case, in order to allow her to mislead the guards and access Adrian's prison; in the purely spiritual context of the Heavenly Kingdom, ineffability replaces the physical dimension, so that the biological dimension becomes nearly irrelevant.

Natalia is not the only female saint among the holy women Kassia has been celebrating who carries out a transgender conversion: according to the hagiographic sources, Thecla also dressed up like a man, taking off her bracelets and expressing her willingness to cut her hair, in order to mislead her prison warden and be able to follow Saint Paul during his preaching; Pelagia, who used to be a Syrian comedian and harlot, became an ascetic on the Mount of Olives by disguising herself like a man and telling people she was called Pelagius. The inclination to deceit and disguise of Natalia, Pelagia and Thecla perfectly matches Kassia's perception of the role of women: the protagonists of her hymns, no matter if martyrs or penitents, prove to be not only deeply pious but also considerably independent and – somehow – emancipated, through the aid of faith itself.

The author of the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas, the hagiographers, and Kassia herself therefore seem to allow and somehow approve female cross-dressing, in spite of the open scriptural condemnation: "A woman shall not wear a man's garment, nor shall a man put on a woman's cloak, for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord our God."[79] This censure was restated during the Council of Gangra in 340, whose Canons "anathematised any woman who 'under pretence of asceticism' wears men's clothing (Canon 13), or cuts her hair 'which God gave [her] as a reminder of [her] subjection' (Canon 17)".[80] Nevertheless, as highlighted by Stavroula Constantinou, "hagiographers often felt obliged to justify the behaviour of their heroes and heroines" by underlining how highly inspired they were.[81] In this regard Kassia is not an exception. In the *Hymn to Saints Natalia and Adrian* she even employs an emphasizing rhetorical question in order to describe the broad admiration and wonder raised by Natalia's action:

> Τίς οὐκ ἐκπλαγῆι ἐν ταύτωι
> ἀκουτισθείς
> τὰς τούτων ὑπὲρ ἄνθρωπον πράξεις! [82]

[79] Deut 22:5.
[80] Constantinou 2014a, 345; Héféle 1907, 1036–39.
[81] Constantinou 2014a, 346.
[82] Kassia, *Menaia* 70–71 Tripolitis.

> Who was not amazed with this
> when they heard
> of their superhuman feats!

Since the cross-dressing of Kassia's holy women mostly consists of their divesting themselves of female typical ornaments and external features, this aim of theirs of disguising themselves as men also matches the early Christian writer's condemnation of attention to outward appearance.[83] This proscription seems to proceed not only from the original biblical re-clothing of Adam and Eve, provided by God with garments of skin symbolizing their animal-like mortality, but also on the basis of earlier cynic and stoic concepts.[84] Apologists and Church Fathers such as Tertullian in his *De cultu feminarum* and Cyprian in his *De habitu virginum* condemned cosmetics, hair dye and jewellery first of all because "they seek to improve on nature, which is an offence at once against the God who created nature and against the truth".[85] Besides – and most importantly – their attempt at external self-improvement has as its main goal the arousal of male lust.[86] According to Tertullian, women even "ought to be ashamed of their beauty".[87] Kassia seems to agree with this critical point of view against corporeal beauty, as we can read in the following *gnomai*:

> Κακὸν ἡ γυνὴ κἂν ὡραία τῷ κάλλει·
> Τὸ γὰρ κάλλος κέκτηται παραμυθίαν[88]
>
> It is not good for a woman to be beautiful,
> For beauty is distracting.
>
> Χάριν κεκτῆσθαι κρεῖττον παρὰ κυρίου
> ἤπερ ἀχαρίτωτον κάλλος καὶ πλοῦτον.
>
> It is better to possess grace from the lord
> Than beauty and wealth that do not gain grace.
>
> Κάλλος πέφυκεν εὔχροια πρὸ τῶν ὅλων,
> ἔπειτα μερῶν καὶ μελῶν συμμετρία.
>
> First comes beauty of countenance,
> And then a well-proportioned body and limbs.

Kassia's point of view, even though ethically oriented, is focused rather on women's individual roles and positions in regard to their own morality and God's judgment,

[83] Howard 1991, 39–40.
[84] Gen 3:21; Coon 1997, 29; Colish 2008, 1–5.
[85] Colish 2008, 9.
[86] Colish 2008, 8.
[87] *De cultu fem*. 1.1.1–2.
[88] Kassia, *Gnomai* 120–21 Tripolitis.

instead of being related to their eventual bad influence on men. Furthermore, such peculiarity of Kassia's ethical concept seems to match what has been stated above about the alleged inner independence and emancipation of her holy women.

This depiction of female figures as positive "deceivers", who nevertheless are supported by God himself, might also constitute a sort of revenge on the male gender by Kassia. According to the historiographical sources, in fact, Kassia had been refused as bride by the emperor Theophilos during the bride show.[89] The legend tells that Theophilos had firstly chosen Kassia as future empress but, feeling guilty for ceding to such a dangerous beauty, he had added: "Now through [a] woman were trickled forth the baser things", referring to Eve's original sin.[90] Kassia, without mincing her words, answered: "But also through [a] woman gush forth the better things", relating to Mary, Mother of God.[91] According to the sources, Kassia's alleged impertinence cost her the coveted role of empress. By celebrating emancipated, enterprising and courageous holy women, who managed to go beyond gender boundaries in order to gain grace, Kassia might have attempted to redeem herself and the whole female gender. However, independently of her supposed self-redemption purpose, it is worth noticing how Kassia *always* defended women and *always* clearly articulated her female point of view, even as early as during the bride-show.

A second but equally important aspect of Kassia's holy women's cross-dressing is its dramatic connotation. As stated by Stavroula Constantinou, "costume, according to a number of theoretical studies on theatre, is an integral part of the assumption of a role", and any "initiation into a role is facilitated by wearing the corresponding attire".[92] The function of costumes is actually unmistakable in configuring a theatrical dimension, since it both precisely addresses the wearer's actions and creates specific expectations in the reader, inasmuch the hagiographic scenes of disguise nearly acquire the form of a ritual. Even though it is impossible to state with certainty how consciously – or unconsciously – Kassia let a gender orientation show in her poems, it is anyway meaningful to underline that the idea of gender has been described as possessing a performative origin. In her enlightening article about gender constitution, Judith Butler states that gender is "an identity instituted through a stylized repetition of acts [...] and not a seemingly seamless identity. [...] The acts by which gender is constituted bear similar-

[89] The historicity of this event has been broadly discussed and a rather sceptical view seems to be predominant. For an in-depth analysis of Theophilos's bride show, see the most exhaustive contributions in this regard: Brooks 1901; Rochow 1967, 5–19; Treadgold 1998.

[90] Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicle*, PG 109, 685C: ὡς ἄρα διὰ γυναικὸς ἐρρύη τὰ φαῦλα; tr. Sherry 2013, 121.

[91] Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicle*, PG 109, 685C: ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ γυναικὸς πηγάζει τὰ κρείττονα; tr. Sherry 2013, 121.

[92] Constantinou 2014a, 349.

ities to performative acts within theatrical contexts."[93] In poems such as Kassia's hagiographical hymns, therefore, a well-defined narratological framework is placed side by side with identifiable theatrical features. Moreover, Kassia's female characters manage to sketch her holy women's own personalities through their performative acts within the narrative structure and, thereby, also to shape some meaningful traits of gender identity.[94]

Moreover, in Kassia's *Menaia* the predominant hymnographic trend often seems to blend with theatrical features and not only in a gender-oriented context.[95] Within the euchologic background, in fact, concepts and events are depicted by Kassia as sudden and incisive as flashes, projecting in front of the reader's and listener's eyes almost veritable images and scenes. In the *Hymn to Saint Mary the Egyptian*, for instance, in just eight verses the female poet manages to evoke a vivid, photographic image, almost a motion picture, presenting the saint's struggle toward salvation as a quasi-liturgical performance:

> Τὰ τῆς ψυχῆς θηρεύματα
> καὶ τὰ πάθη τῆς σαρκός
> τῷ ξίφει τῆς ἐγκρατείας ἔτεμες
> τὰ τῆς ἐννοίας ἐγκλήματα
> τῇ σιγῇ τῆς ἀσκήσεως ἀπέπνιξας,
> καὶ ῥείθροις τῶν δακρύων σου
> τὴν ἔρημον ἅπασαν κατήρδευσας,
> καὶ ἐβλάστησας ἡμῖν τῆς μετανοίας καρπούς
> διό σου τὴν μνήμην, Ὁσία, ἑορτάζομεν.[96]
>
> You severed the temptations of the soul
> and the passions of the body
> with the sword of temperance;
> the crimes of the mind
> you choked with the silence of spiritual discipline,
> and with streams of your tears
> you watered the entire desert,
> and made to grow in us the seeds of repentance:
> therefore we celebrate your memory, Holy one.

In this hymn Kassia seems to create an actual stage set for a single character: the several terms related to the natural sphere, such as ῥεῖθρος and ἔρημος (vs. 6–7) evoke crystal

[93] Butler 1988, 519–21.
[94] In this regard, see also Constantinou 2014b, 2.
[95] On the relationship between the decline of theatre in Greek-Byzantine culture and the medieval emergence of liturgical drama, see, among others: Sathas 1878; Beck 1981, 152–56; Walker White 2015, 47–85.
[96] Kassia, Menaia 48–49 Tripolitis.

clear and almost tangible images, giving the depiction an almost scenic concreteness even though in a pure metaphorical context. The verbs strongly express the actual and well-defined actions of the female saint and lend the scene a considerable dynamism: through a sharp movement of her sword, Maria cuts off her tempting corporal vices (v. 3: ἔτεμες) and, in the following verses, she industriously deals with horticulture, by pruning and cultivating, flushing and letting grow the seeds of repentance (vs. 7–8: κατήρδευσας, ἐβλάστησας) like a proper gardener.

It is important to underscore that applying classical classification – such as the drama – to the Byzantine genres has been considered pointless and unsuitable, as observed by Margaret Mullett in her essay about literary genres in Byzantium in honour of Alexander Kazhdan. Furthermore, as we can also read in Andrew Walker White's monograph about performance in Orthodox ritual, Christianity's roots lie in the anti-Hellenistic and anti-theatrical background of the geographical and cultural context of the Holy Land, where plays were considered non- or even anti-literate.[97] Moreover, according to Walker White, liturgy was first of all a "primarily spiritual experience [...] and not an aesthetic one."[98] Therefore, mentioning the term 'drama' while describing Byzantine texts risks generating misunderstanding. On the other hand, Plato's distinction between lyric (authorial), dramatic (figured), and narrative (mixed)"[99] seems to be particularly fitting to Kassia's poetical pattern: a highly matching blend of liturgical poetry and dramatic elements, which conceal some of the narratological features I have been trying to illustrate in the previous pages.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the end, after ranging among the variety of narratological theories elaborated in the last decades, I have had to face the complexity of trying to apply contemporary approaches and structures to such ancient texts. Although arguably outdated, Vladimir Propp's structural analysis seems to suit Kassia's religious hymns almost perfectly. As I suggested in the introduction, this might depend on the similar nature of the literary and cultural substrate we have been dealing with: the oral and popular origin of the hagiographic tales, together with their underlying role as *exempla*, has much in common with the Russian folktale adopted by Propp as the main object of his investigation.[100] Far from already being exhausted, the possibilities of analysing Kassia's texts further from a narratological point of view are numerous and quite challenging, and

[97] Walker White 2015, 52.

[98] Ibid. See also Eriksen in this volume, n. 6.

[99] Mullett 1992, 235; Plato, *Republic* 392c–d.

[100] In this regard, see Propp 1958, 3–17 and Pratsch 2005, 9–12.

their investigations through Propp's structural approach might serve as inspiration or impulse for further research.

In light of these observations I can conclude by observing that the theme of Kassia's poetic constructions clearly demonstrates her intent. She was able to bend narrative methods, syntactic structure and lexicon to her own needs in order to achieve the desired result of the celebration and supplication found in her hymns. Furthermore, she managed to blend different genres – hymnography, hagiographic fiction and dramatic devices – in order to celebrate the glory of the holy women by narrating, playing and singing their deeds with one voice, which was at the same time her voice, a woman's voice and the voice of the whole Christian community. Therefore, it might be defined a poetic *reductio ad unum*: there is one central goal to the female saint's celebration: the redemption, in a collective dimension, through the intercession of the saint with God. After all, this is the final intent of the folktale and, by extension, of hagiography too: to show the possibility for everyone of a happy ending.[101]

[101] I gratefully acknowledge my friend and colleague Isidor Brodersen (Universität Duisburg-Essen) for his tireless support during the revision of the English language in the present study.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

Kassia, *Menaia*. Ed. A. Tripolitis, *Cassia. The Legend, the Woman and her Work*. London 1992.

Kassia, *Gnomai*. Ed. A. Tripolitis, *Cassia. The Legend, the Woman and her Work*. London 1992.

Hesychius, *Lexicon* (A–O). Ed. K. Latte, *Hesychii Alexandrini lexicon*, vols. 1–2. Copenhagen 1953–1966.

Homer, *Odyssey*. Ed. P. Von der Mühll. *Homeri Odyssea*. Basel 1962.

Patria Constantinopoleos. Ed. T. Präger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitarum*, vol. 2. Leipzig 1907.

Plato, *Republic*. Ed. J. Burnet, *Platonis opera*, vol. 4. Oxford 1902.

Suda. Ed. A. Adler. *Suidae lexicon*, 5 vols. Leipzig 1928–1938.

Symeon the Logothete, *Chronicle*. PG 109, 663–23.

Tertullian, *De cultu feminarum*. Ed. A. Kroymann, *Corpus christianorum series latina* 11, Turnhout 1954, 341–70.

Theodore Stoudites, *Epistles*. Ed. G. Fatouros, *Theodori Studitae epistulae*, 2 vols. CFHB 31, Berlin 1992, 1: 5–187, 2 :189–861.

Life of Pelagia. Ed. B. Flusin, *Pélagie la Pénitente. Metamorphoses d'une légende*, vol. 1, 76–93. Paris 1981.

Secondary sources

Beck, H. G. 1981. *Il millennio bizantino*. Rome.

Bourbouhakis, E. C. and I. Nilsson 2010. "Byzantine narrative: the form of storytelling in Byzantium", in James (ed.) 2010, 263–74.

Brooks, E. W. 1901. "The marriage of the emperor Theophilus" *BZ* 10, 540–45.

Butler, J. 1988. "Performative acts and gender constitution: an essay in phenomenology and feminist theory" *Theatre Journal* 40/4, 519–31.

Campbell, W. S. 2010. "The narrator as 'He,' 'Me,' and 'We': grammatical person in ancient histories and in the Acts of the Apostles" *Journal of Biblical Literature* 129/2: 385–407.

Colish, M. 2008. *The Fathers and Beyond. Church Fathers between Ancient and Medieval Thought*. Aldershot.

Constantinou, S. 2014a. "Holy actors and actresses: fools and cross-dressers as the protagonists of saints' Lives", in Efthymiadis (ed.) 2014, vol. 2*: Genres and Contexts*, 345–64.

——— 2014b. "Performing gender in lay saints' Lives" *BMGS* 38/1, 24–32.

Coste, D. 1989. *Narrative as Communication*. Minneapolis.

Coon, L. L. 1997. *Sacred Fictions. Holy Women and Hagiography in Late Antiquity*. Philadelphia.

Efthymiadis, S. (ed.) 2014. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography,* 2 vols, Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VA

Eder, J. 2008. *Die Figur im Film. Grundlage der Figurenanalyse*. Marburg.

Finnern, S. 2014 "Narration in religious discourse: the example of Christianity", in LHN (accessed April 2016).

Garland, L. 2011. *Byzantine Empresses: Women and Power in Byzantium AD 527–1204*. London and New York.

Genette, G. 1972 [1980]. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Tr. J. E. Lewin. Ithaca, NY.

Giannouli, A. 2014. "Byzantine hagiography and hymnography: an interrelationship", in Efthymiadis (ed.) 2014, 285–312.

Greimas, A. J. 1971. *Strukturale Semantik. Methodologische Untersuchungen*. Brunswick.

Grosso, M. 2011. *Vangelo secondo Tommaso*. Rome.

Hartner, M. 2012 "Multiperspectivity", in LHN (accessed 1 December 2017).

Héfélé, C. J. 1907. *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, vol. 1. Tr. H. Leclerq. Paris.

Howard, B. R. 1991. *Medieval Misogyny and the Invention of Western Romantic Love*. Chicago.

Hühn, P. 2013. "Narration in poetry and drama", in LHN (accessed 1 December 2017).

Hutchinson, P. 1984. *Games Authors Play*. London.

James, L. (ed.) 2010. *A Companion to Byzantium*. Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World, Chichester and Maldon, MA.

Jannidis, F. 2012. "Character", in LNH (accessed 1 December 2017).

Krumbacher, K. 1897. *Kasia*. München.

——— 1892. "Studien zu den Legenden des Heiligen Theodosius", *Sitzungsberichte der philos- ophischen-philologischen und der historischen Classe der königlichen Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*. Munich, 220–379.

Lanser, S. S. 1992. *Fiction of Authority: Women Writers and Narrative Voice*. Ithaca NY and London.

——— 2013. "Gender and narrative", in LHN (accessed 1 December 2017).

Lauxtermann, M. 1998. "Three biographical notes" *BZ* 91, 391–403.

LHN = *The Living Handbook of Narratology*. Eds P. Hühn, P. et al. Hamburg. 2013 [2009]: http://www.lhn.uni-hamburg.de

Mullett, M. 1992. "The madness of genre" *DOP* 46 = *Homo Byzantinus: Papers in Honor of Alexander Kazhdan*, 233–43.

Margolin, U. 1991. "Reference, coreference, referring, and the dual structure of literary narrative", *Poetics Today* 12.33, 517–42.

Margolin, U. 2014. "Narrator", LHN (accessed 1 December 2017).

Niederhoff, B. 2011. "Perspective – Point of View", in LHN (accessed 1 December 2017).

Nilsson, I. 2010. "The same story, but another: a reappraisal of literary imitation in Byzantium", in Rhoby and Schiffer (eds) 2010, 195–208.

Nünning, A. and Nünning, V. 2000. *Multiperspektivisches Erzählen: Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Perspektivenstruktur im englischen Roman des 18. Bis 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Trier.

Pfister, M. 1988. *The Theory and Analysis of Drama*. Cambridge.

Pratsch, T. 2005. *Der hagiographische Topos. Griechische Heiligenviten in mittelbyzantinischer Zeit*. Berlin and New York.

Propp, V. J. 1958. *Morphology of the Folktale*. Tr. L. Scott. Eastford, CT.

Rhoby, A. and E. Schiffer 2010. *Imitatio – aemulatio – variatio: Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlischen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatu*r (Wien, 22.-25. Oktober 2008). Vienna.

Rochow, I. 1967. *Studien zu der Person, den Werken und dem Nachleben der Dichterin Kassia*. Berliner byzantinistische Arbeiten 38, Berlin.

Sathas, C. 1878. *Ἱστορικὸν δοκίμιον περὶ τοῦ θεάτρου καὶ τῆς μουσικῆς τῶν Βυζαντινῶν*. Venice.

Sherry, K. 2013. *Kassia the Nun in Context. The Religious Thought of a Ninth-Century Byzantine Monastic*. Piscataway, NJ.

Silvas, A. M. 2006. "Cassia the nun c. 810–c.865: an appreciation", in L. Garland (ed.) 2006, *Byzantine Women: Varieties of Experience AD 800–1220*. London, 17–40.

Treadgold, W. 1998. "The problem of the marriage of the emperor Theophilus" *GRBS* 16, 325–41.

Walker White, A. 2015. *Performing Orthodox Ritual in Byzantium*. Cambridge.

Wellesz, E. 1961. *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*. Oxford.

8

SAINTS IN DISGUISE: PERFORMANCE IN *THE LIFE OF JOHN KALYVITES* (BHG 868), *THE LIFE OF THEODORA OF ALEXANDRIA* (BHG 1727) AND *THE LIFE OF SYMEON SALOS* (BHG 1677)

Julie Van Pelt

The last decades have witnessed a growing interest in the study of hagiographical texts as narratives, which has resulted in a more widespread awareness of the fact that these are indeed "highly entertaining, or even impressive from a literary point of view."[1] One of the literary *topoi* that has come out of studies in this field as a major point of interest is the *topos* of secrecy and concealed identity or concealed sanctity.[2] In particular, two holy character types that were highly popular in the Byzantine hagiographical tradition have enjoyed interest from scholars looking at hagiography as literature: the holy fool and the cross-dresser.[3] Both of these types conceal their identities (his/her sanctity, in the case of the fool, and her sex, in the case of the cross-dresser) and consequently have their narratives revolve around the keeping and disclosing of this secret identity.

While indeed a considerable amount of research has been done on hagiographies featuring concealed identity/sanctity, and on the *Lives* of fools and cross-dressers in particular, only few scholars have dealt with this *topos* in a more inclusive way by studying different types of saints together. Britt Dahlman was one of the first to study the cross-dresser and the holy fool as two manifestations of one concept, 'secret holiness', and compares them on the basis that "both the cross-dresser and the holy fool ques-

[1] Rydén 2004, 58.

[2] This *topos* is referred to by Bernard Flusin in his chapter on "le serviteur caché" (2004), and it is discussed under the heading of 'secret holiness' by Britt Dahlman in her study on the so-called Daniel cycle, a collection of short stories that contains tales of holy men and women with a particular focus on secrecy and disguise (2007).

[3] E.g. Rydén 1995, Déroche 1995 and 2000, Krueger 1996, Hotchkiss 1996, Davis 2002, Lubinsky 2013 and Constantinou 2014. On the popularity of *Lives* of cross-dressers and fools in Byzantium, see Constantinou 2014, 344–45.

tion and transgress boundaries, in particular those of gender and sense."[4] Dahlman's observations with regard to the *Narrations* by Daniel of Sketis call for more in-depth comparison between *Lives* of cross-dressers and holy fools in general. Stavroula Constantinou provides such a comparative study of both groups of texts from a literary perspective.[5] In her recent article, she approaches holy fools and cross-dressers as 'holy actors' and 'holy actresses'; by focusing on aspects of the 'performance' of the saint, she examines the literary depiction of the two roles.

Apart from the stories about fools and cross-dressers, Byzantine hagiography features other saints who also hide their identities through forms of disguise. One of them is John Kalyvites, the saint who pretends to be a beggar in front of his parents' house. His *Life* shares important features with *Lives* of cross-dressers and holy fools, not just when it comes to themes, but also when it comes to narrative construction. Therefore, the *Life of John Kalyvites*, as well as other stories like it,[6] may also be included in the study of hagiographical narratives featuring concealed identity and studied in parallel with *Lives* of cross-dressers and fools. All these *Lives* feature 'saints in disguise,' a term I prefer to the more commonly used term 'secret saint,' because the latter seems to denote characters who are secretly a saint (i.e. who hide their holiness, such as the holy fool), thus excluding other types of saints who conceal their identities on other grounds (the cross-dressers, for instance, merely hide their sex in order to be able to reach sanctity, but their holiness in itself is usually not concealed[7]). More accurate when taking together different hagiographical stories dealing with concealed identity is to regard the 'secret saint' as a particular type of 'saint in disguise.' Also, previous studies dealing with 'secret sainthood' or 'secret holiness' have often focused on examining the moral message that is conveyed by the dissimulation of one's sanctity in particular,[8] not on the narrative potential of the *topos* of concealed identity more generally and the results of the saint's disguise on a literary level, which is my intention here.[9] Reading the *Life*

[4] 2007, 73.

[5] Constantinou 2014.

[6] Another example of a hagiographic tale featuring concealed identity other than the *Lives* of fools and cross-dressers is the Greek *Life of Abraham and his Niece Mary,* in which Abraham rescues his niece Mary from a brothel disguised as a soldier (BHG 5–8e).

[7] In the *Life of Euphrosyne* (BHG 625), for instance, the saint clearly excels in asceticism and is therefore most revered among all the brothers in the monastery she resides in. Also Theodora, the protagonist of the *Life* discussed in this chapter, is accepted among the brothers of the monastery because she appears to enjoy God's grace (she is not harmed by the wild animals outside the monastery). It is only after false accusations, against which she fails to defend herself, that Theodora's spiritual status becomes doubtful to the brothers in the monastery.

[8] E.g. Bousset 1922, Ivanov 1998 and Dahlman 2007.

[9] Derek Krueger is the only one to discuss the theme of concealed sanctity in hagiography from a narrative perpective. In the fourth chapter of his book on the *Life of Symeon* he provides a list of

of John Kalyvites (BHG 868)[10] alongside the *Life of Theodora of Alexandria* (BHG 1727),[11] a cross-dresser, and the *Life of Symeon Salos* (BHG 1677),[12] a holy fool,[13] I aim in this chapter to investigate the larger implications of the themes of secrecy and disguise for the overall construction of these three hagiographical texts, which cut across the boundaries of traditional gender divisions and character types.

Following Constantinou, who looks at holy fools and cross-dressers as 'actors' and 'actresses', I shall analyse the 'performance' of these saints in disguise, by which I denote those deeds of the saint which can be described as deliberately deceptive role-playing. The saint 'performs' as (s)he pretends to be someone (s)he is not and consequently plays a part or performs an act for a large part of his/her *Life*. On this interpretative level, then, 'performance' is understood in the narrow sense as a staged public appearance of an individual in front of an audience.

Analysing the performance of the saint in disguise, I am particularly interested in the way in which that performance is *narrated*. My analysis will therefore also engage with another strand of the modern concept of performance, developed in narrative studies, namely the idea that texts are 'performances' in a game between author and reader.[14] Since the so-called 'turn to the reader', literary scholars have started to contend that, if meaning is not inherent in the ink on the paper, then "the meaningful text

features shared by stories on secret saints which are found repeatedly, allowing us to describe a "generic literary type" (1996, 70–71).

[10] I use the edition by O. Lampsides (1966), unless stated otherwise. References to this text will take the form of '*VJohn*' followed by the number of the page and the number of the line. All translations of this text are my own.

[11] I use the first text provided in the edition by K. Wessely (1889), which is a transcription of Paris. Gr. 1468. References to this text will take the form of '*VTheo*' followed by the number of the page and the number of the line in Wessely's text. All translations of this text are my own.

[12] I use the edition by L. Rydén and A. J. Festugière (1974–1977). References to this text will take the form of '*VSym*' followed by the number of the page and the number of the line in Festugière's text. Translations of this text are taken from Krueger 1996.

[13] The choice for these *Lives* is necessarily arbitrary, as many other tales on disguised saints could have served the purposes of this chapter. The *Lives* of Theodora and Symeon have been randomly selected from among the Greek *Lives* of cross-dressers and fools. As for the *Life of John Kalyvites*, I selected it from among other candidates because, in addition to having received far less attention from literary scholars than it deserves, the story represents a rather early case of a Byzantine tale of a disguised saint, and is thought to be the precursor of the more famous story of Alexis the Man of God (BHG 51–56h), which entered the Greek tradition from Syriac, and on which the *Life of John* presumably exerted influence in this process of translation (see Stebbins 1973, 502–4).

[14] This idea has gained ground in the past few decades. See for example MacLean 1988, Issacharoff & Jones 1988, Petrey 1990, Iser 1993, Wirth (ed.) 2002 and Bazerman 2003. Developing the idea that narrative is performance, MacLean and others build on J. L. Austin's speech act theory (1962). The idea of narrative as performance is applied to hagiography by von Contzen 2016.

is always a performance, whether by the writer or the reader".[15] In this context, 'performance' is understood more broadly, not as staged role-playing, but as meaningful action. As defined by Marie MacLean, "performance at its most general and most basic level is a carrying out, a putting into action or into shape".[16] In this light, a narrative can be regarded as 'performing', because it gives shape to the raw material of the story. Of course, its performance depends on being activated by a reader (resulting in a different performance with every new reading), but it performs nonetheless. Following in particular Charles Bazerman, who uses the term as well, I shall refer in the rest of this chapter to the performance of the narrative as 'textual performance'.[17] Textual performance is particularly conspicuous in instances where the text foregrounds the act of narration itself in a more or less explicit way. Such instances can consist of "the narrator's verbal self-thematizations, his or her explicit comments on the story or the act of narration and addresses to the reader".[18] However, more covert narrative strategies, especially the more sophisticated ones, can also focus our attention on the act of narration itself and thus foreground textual performance.

Every narrative is in a way a performance, but in *Lives* of saints in disguise the *story* that is told by the narrative involves performance as well (theatrical role-playing, in this case), a phenomenon defined by Marie MacLean as "embedded performance".[19] Naturally, the two levels of performance are inextricably tied up with each other as the literary portrayal of the performance of the saint always relies on the textual performance of the narrative. The analysis that follows aims to shed light on how intra-diegetic performance (or performance on story-level, i.e. performance by the saint) and textual performance are related in the three selected *Lives*, and to show that their interplay results in an interesting literary game, turning these narratives into enjoyable pieces of literature that may appeal to a wide audience.

DISGUISE

The *Life of John Kalyvites* was probably written towards the end of the sixth century, although its precise dating is unsure.[20] It recounts the story of a young boy called John who lives in Constantinople and is raised by his parents to pursue a worldly career and get married. John, however, secretly dreams of a life of asceticism. One day, he meets a

[15] Bazerman 2003, 382.
[16] MacLean 1988, xi.
[17] Bazerman 2003.
[18] Berns 2009, 96.
[19] MacLean 1988, 12–13.
[20] Baguenard 1988, 196.

monk and begs him to take him to his monastery. The monk agrees and John runs away from home. After having lived in the monastery for six years, the devil inflicts on him the desire to see his parents again. With the abbot's permission, John returns home. However, instead of making himself known, he pretends to be a beggar. His parents do not recognize him for three years and his mother even has him removed from her porch. When John's death is near, he sends for his parents, who recognize the Bible they once gave to their son. Then, John finally reveals his identity and dies.

Crucial in this story of humility is the fact that John is not recognized by his parents. His anonymity and the concealment of his identity are key in achieving an extraordinary level of asceticism, as they allow him to defy the devil's plans by even enhancing his burden rather than giving in to it.[21] An important factor in making this possible as well as plausible on a narrative level, is what we may call the 'disguise' of the saint. John's appearance undergoes drastic changes before his return to Constantinople. First, during his stay in the monastery, John's excessive asceticism transforms his body radically and turns him into a ghostlike figure.[22] Then, while travelling home, he meets a beggar and switches clothes with him.[23] These changes prove very effective later on in the narrative: the first thing the housekeeper notices when he sees John are his stained and ragged clothes,[24] while his mother is shocked at the sight of a "wild" and "barefoot" man lying outside her home.[25] When John then states: "I am a beggar,"[26] this statement is received readily by his audience. Thus, the changes to John's outward appearance raise certain expectations in the intra-diegetic audience and thereby support the performance of the saint, which aligns him with other saints in disguise, whose appearance is also crucial for their performances.

This is not in the least so for women who enter male monasteries. The *Life of Theodora,*[27] presumably also dated to the sixth century,[28] is no exception. It tells of a woman

[21] What Arietta Papaconstantinou remarks on the *Life of Theodora* thus perfectly applies to John's case as well, namely that non-recognition (and especially not making yourself known to your beloved ones) constitutes a certain vigour in asceticism (2004, 74).

[22] *VJohn* 8.36–37: διότι ἡ πολλὴ ἐγκράτεια καὶ ἡ νηστεία καταφθείρει τὸ σῶμα and 9.5–7: ὥστε, ὡς εἶπον, ἐκ τῆς πολλῆς νηστείας καὶ ἀγρυπνίας καὶ τοῦ πολλοῦ πόθου τῶν γονέων μὴ αὐταρκῆσαι τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ γενέσθαι αὐτὸν ὡς σκιὰν θανάτου.

[23] *VJohn* 10.9–13.

[24] *VJohn* 10.27: βλέπει αὐτὸν κατεστιγμένον καὶ ῥακοδυτοῦντα.

[25] I follow here exceptionally the reading provided in PG 114, 577 which mentions ἀνυπόδητον in addition to ἄγριον (also mentioned in the text provided by Lampsides at 11.7).

[26] *VJohn* 10.30: ἄνθρωπός εἰμι πτωχός.

[27] The *Life of Theodora* has mainly been studied in relation to other *Lives* of cross-dressers. More detailed analysis is provided by Papaconstantinou 2004, Constantinou 2005 (chapter 3) and Capron 2013, 125–169.

[28] Papaconstantinou 2004, 68.

who, after committing adultery, runs away from her husband out of shame and guilt. She cuts her hair, dresses in men's clothes and presents herself in a male monastery as Theodore. There, she undergoes subsequent trials that test her faith. One day, she is sent to deliver a message and sleeps in the stables of a neighbouring monastery. At night, the daughter of the abbot enters the stables and, thinking that Theodora is a man, tries to seduce her. Theodora refuses and the girl has intercourse with another man. When she discovers that she is pregnant, she blames Theodora. After the child is born, it is brought to the monastery where Theodora stays and both she and the child are cast outside to survive in the wilderness. There, she is attacked by the devil several times until she nearly dies. Eventually, she is admitted back into the monastery where she and the child are locked up in a small cell, until Theodora passes away. Her real identity is meanwhile revealed to the abbot in a dream. When they find her body and discover that she is indeed a woman, they spread the news.

As in most *Lives* of cross-dressers, the change in the outward appearance of the saint, which consists of cutting her hair and changing into men's clothing, clearly marks the beginning of her male performance, allowing her to pass as the opposite gender.[29] Moreover, as Laurent Capron notes, in the *Life of Theodora* clothing and changes of dress play an important role, as the theme reappears time and again to mark transitions in Theodora's life.[30] As such, her disguise, consisting primarily of clothes that conceal her true nature, is not only successful in convincing her (intra-diegetic) audience that she is a man (with the crucial turning-point event of being seduced and falsely accused as a result), but it also adds to the overall theatrical and dramatic dimension of the text.[31] In particular, the initial 'trans-vesting' scene is treated rather elaborately in the *Life of Theodora*, as (contrary to most other *Lives* of cross-dressers) the text specifically mentions not only the clothes she puts on, but also the clothes she takes *off*, as well as the golden jewellery she was wearing.[32] This detail is symbolic for her change of lifestyle and emphasizes that, from this point onwards, she leaves behind her sinful past and becomes a new person in the eyes of God. In this sense, the change of her appearance is not merely a disguise of her female identity, but also, and to the contrary, a marker for her new pious identity. Thus, the narration of this aspect of the saint's performance supports the story's message of spiritual transformation and penitence.

We may note at this point that, in a similar fashion, the theme of clothing is rehearsed in the *Life of John* in order to support his holy identity. The changes to his

[29] On the stereotypical disguise of the cross-dressers, see Constantinou 2005, 109.

[30] Capron 2013, 152.

[31] For the *Life*'s theatrical and dramatic dimension, see Capron 2013, esp. 168–69.

[32] *VTheo* 27.9–11: ἀπεθύσατο [sic] τὰ ἱμάτια ἃ ἦν ἐνδεδυμένη καὶ τὸν κόσμον τοῦ χρυσοῦ ὃν ἐφόρει καὶ ἐκείρατο τὴν κόμην τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτῆς· καὶ ἀνεδύσατο τὰ ἱμάτια τοῦ ἀνδρὸς αὐτῆς.

appearance which take place before his return are indeed crucial to understand why he is not recognized by his parents, but at the same time they are also firm traces of his ascetic behaviour. At the end of the narrative, John forbids his parents to bury him in anything else but the simple clothes he is wearing, an order which his mother fails to obey.[33] Being miraculously punished for this,[34] she not only gives in to the saint's final wishes, but also becomes living proof of the sanctity of John.

Finally, the *Life of Symeon Salos* is the only one among the narratives discussed in this chapter which can be dated with more certainty because we know it is composed by a seventh-century author, Leontius of Neapolis.[35] In this *Life*, the saint resorts to rather unusual means in order to make his appearance support his act of foolishness. After having lived in the desert for years together with his dear friend John, Symeon returns to society and goes to Emesa where he plays the fool and pretends to be crazy: he runs around naked, harasses women, defecates in public, but he also performs miracles.[36] His goal is to secretly edify the people in the city, without revealing his holy identity. Only his close friend John the deacon (not the same John as the one he lived with in the desert) knows from the beginning who he really is. Upon entering Emesa for the first time, Symeon ties a dead dog to his belt and drags it along,[37] thus instantly establishing his reputation as a fool. At several occasions thereafter he appears naked in public; his disguise consists of few clothes, as it is precisely the lack of clothes that marks his position as fool.[38] Nonetheless, as in the two *Lives* discussed above, the saint's physical appearance is altered in order to support his/her performance, ultimately concealing his/her true identity, which can only be revealed when at the end the disguise is somehow uplifted; literally, in the case of Theodora, figuratively in the case of Symeon, whose body shows a final transformation after his death as it miraculously disappears, thereby making the citizens understand the true – that is holy – identity of Symeon. In John's case, as we have seen, it takes two more changes of dress (into the golden threaded clothing and back into his beggar's clothes) to have his mother fully recognize the holy identity of her son.

[33] *VJohn* 12.30: ἐνέδυσεν αὐτὸν χρυσόστημα ἱμάτια. Thus, just as in the *Life of Theodora*, the detail of the golden finery (χρυσόστημα), associated with a perverse lifestyle that the saint has abandoned, serves to underline the holy identity of the saint.

[34] *VJohn* 12.29–33.

[35] On this author and the dating of the *Life of Symeon*, see among others Mango 1984 and Déroche 1995.

[36] For a discussion of the miracles performed by Symeon, see Déroche 2000, 47–52.

[37] *VSym* 79.21–23.

[38] For further discussion on the 'mask of the fool' and his nakedness as a costume denoting folly, see Constantinou 2014.

PERFORMANCE STRATEGY

While (the literary portrayal of) the saint's performance relies in important ways on the saint's disguise, constituted by his/her outward appearance, this is not enough to render it successful; also the sayings and deeds of the saint must be in line with the identity (s)he projects and support the dissimulation of what (s)he wants to conceal (whether that means dissimulation of one's parentage, one's sex or one's sanctity). Throughout the *Life of John*, the saint's performance builds on the sophisticated use of rhetoric and subterfuge. Even in the first part of the narrative, when he is strictly speaking not yet 'in disguise' because he has not yet hidden his identity, John hides his intentions from his parents and other characters who might obstruct his plans to leave, and comes up with all kinds of ruses to deceive them. For example, he tricks his parents into giving him a Bible and, later, a large sum of money in order to pay for a rented boat on which he escapes. To do so, John engages in rhetorically and psychologically sophisticated speech. For instance, when addressing his mother, he employs *captatio benevolentiae* ("Dear mother, you who have raised me so beautifully from the beginning, in a way that few mothers do with their own children"[39]), capturing the goodwill of his audience before asking for favours. Also, he comes up with false stories that his parents, who are characterized by worldly ambition and vainglory, can relate to ("I ask one more favour from you that adds to your own prestige" or "I can no longer go to school without risking humiliation"[40]), thus adopting the perspective of his audience in order to maximize the impact of his performance and ultimately be more persuasive. Towards the end of the story, when his death is near, John wants to see his mother one final time. He knows, however, that she will not easily agree to see him, as she has been acting violently towards him. Therefore, he approaches the housekeeper, who, on the contrary, has been benevolent, and asks him to deliver a message to her, saying:

> I ask you, my lord, have pity on me as always, and help me by telling our mistress the following: "the beggar that lies at your gates, the one you ordered to be chased away, implores you through me, saying: 'do not treat the poor beggar arrogantly but be so kind as to speak to him forbearingly.'"[41]

[39] *VJohn* 7.31: κυρία μου μήτηρ, ἡ καλῶς ἀναθρεψαμένη με ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὡς ὀλίγαι μητέρες ἀνέθρεψαν τὰ ἴδια τέκνα

[40] E.g. *VJohn* 7.33–34: *νῦν ἔτι μίαν αἴτησιν αἰτοῦμαι παρ' ὑμῶν εἰς ὑμέτερον καύχημα*, or 7.37–38: οὔτε εἰς διατριβὴν δύναμαι ἀπέρχεσθαι ὑπὸ τῆς ἐντροπῆς ἁλισκόμενος.

[41] *VJohn* 11.27–31: δέομαί σου, κύριέ μου, ἐλέησόν με ὡς καὶ πάντοτε, καὶ διακόνησόν με πρὸς τὴν κυρίαν ἡμῶν τάδε· ὅτι ὁ πτωχὸς ὁ πρὸς τὴν πύλην σου κείμενος, ὃν ἐκέλευσας διωχθῆναι, παρακαλεῖ δι' ἐμοῦ λέγων μὴ ὑπερηφανήσῃς τὸν πτωχὸν καὶ πένητα, ἀλλὰ ἀνεξικάκως θέλησον αὐτῷ λαλῆσαι. The text of PG 114, 580 has a slightly different reading at the end of this passage, building up even more narrative suspense: *ἀλλὰ καταξίωσον ἔλθειν πρὸς αὐτὸν, ὅτι ἔχει ἵνα πρὸς σε εἴπῃ*.

In this passage, which entails a complex accumulation of embedded speech, John plays on the idea of a message withheld and manages to raise a certain curiosity in his mother ("What could that beggar have to tell me [...]?"[42]), who is finally won over to meet him. Moreover, the rhetorical complexity of the passage shifts our attention towards the performance of the text; the rhetorical character of the saint's performance is not just referenced in this sentence, it is constructed by it. This passage demonstrates that, in the case of John's rhetorical speech, the performance of the saint in disguise *is* textual performance as the one directly constitutes the other.[43] Here, moreover, the effect of curiosity that this passage has on John's mother is mirrored in the narrative suspense that it raises for the reader, who perceives not only the performance of the saint, but also that of the text.

Like John's, Theodora's performance entails more than just putting on a disguise. However, in making sure that her deeds and her words support her performed identity, she adopts a strategy which is very different from John's. While the latter reaches his goals through the clever use of speech and rhetoric, making up stories and devising ruses, Theodora speaks very little, and when she speaks, she never says anything that is far removed from the truth. When she first enters the monastery and is questioned by the abbot, she tells him that she came to atone, which we know is true.[44] In fact, the only thing she lies about is her name, and even then, her answer to the abbot's question ("Theodore") is remarkably close to the truth.[45] A little later in the narrative, Theodora is sent to the city to run an errand and encounters her husband. Instead of hiding from him, as a saint in disguise may be expected to do, she approaches him and says to him plainly (and truthfully!): "Greetings, my man".[46] Nevertheless, he still fails to recognize her, despite the clear instructions he received earlier from an angel, who, in reply to his request to show him his wife,[47] told him the exact location where he would meet her and that "whoever should meet you there, this is your wife".[48] Of course, the ambiguity of Theodora's words (does 'man' mean 'husband'?) allows for this failure of

[42] *VJohn* 11.32–3: καὶ ἄρα τί μοι ἔχει λαλήσειν ὁ πτωχὸς οὗτος [...];

[43] See MacLean 1988, 11–12 for a general discussion of the performative function of dialogue and direct speech.

[44] *VTheo* 28.10–11.

[45] Theodora is certainly not the only cross-dresser who adopts the male version of her female name (e.g. Marina/Marinos or Pelagia/Pelagios), but there are plenty of counterexamples as well (e.g. Euphrosyne/Smaragdus or Susanna/John). For further discussion of the cross-dressers' male names, see Constantinou 2005, 109–11 and Lubinsky 2013, 116 and 149–52.

[46] *VTheo* 30.7–8: χαῖρε ἄνερ μου καὶ κύριε.

[47] *VTheo* 29.18: δεῖξόν μοι αὐτήν.

[48] *VTheo* 30.1–2: ὄρθρισον ἐπὶ τὴν ὁδὸν τοῦ μαρτυρίου Πέτρου τοῦ ἀποστόλου καὶ ὅστις ἂν προσαγορεύσῃ σοι αὐτός ἐστιν ἡ γυνή σου.

recognition (which was triggered in the very first place by her male attire[49]) to take place against all odds. Interestingly, this strange situation is reversed later in the narrative.[50] When Theodora is attacked by the devil, she herself becomes the audience of the devil's performance, who appears to her disguised as her husband and tries to tempt her to return to her secular life. Just like her husband, she does not recognize the real identity of the performer, but, while her husband actually meets his wife and does not realise it, Theodora merely sees a phantasm and thinks it is her husband. The situation is thus highly similar and exactly opposite at the same time. Insofar as he can make Theodora believe he is her husband, the devil's act is successful. Moreover, his speech is rhetorically elaborate and psychologically convincing, reminding us of the kind of performance displayed in the *Life of John*. Nevertheless, contrary to John's speeches, the devil's performance eventually fails to attain its goal: even in the belief that it is her husband who begs her to come home and forgives her for what she did, Theodora turns down the proposal, devoted as she is to her life of asceticism. In the *Life of Theodora*, then, subterfuge and rhetorical embellishment are not a valued performance strategy (contrary to the *Life of John*, where they allow the saint to reach sanctity). In this *Life*, such devilish tricks do not work on Theodora, while she herself manages to put up a successful performance with a minimum of lying. When she speaks, she adheres to the truth; her rhetoric simply consists in omitting those parts of the truth that would break her cover.

Finally, Symeon certainly looks like a fool, but in addition he continuously acts like one. He babbles,[51] throws things,[52] dances around,[53] eats insatiably,[54] and "sometimes he pretended to have a limp, sometimes he jumped around, sometimes he dragged himself along on his buttocks, sometimes he stuck out his foot for someone running and tripped him".[55] Thus, his performance relies heavily on the public display of certain behaviour that may easily be interpreted as signs of an unstable mental condition.

[49] *VTheo* 30.2–4: ὁ ἀνὴρ αὐτῆς εἶδεν τὰς καμήλους καὶ αὐτὴν μετ' αὐτῶν καὶ ἐν τῷ φορεῖν αὐτὴν ἀνδρικὸν σχῆμα σύρουσα τὰς καμήλους οὐκ ἐγνώρισεν αὐτὴν ὅλως.

[50] On the structure of the *Life of Theodora* which consists of different pairs of mirroring passages, see Capron 2013, 127–28.

[51] E.g. *VSym* 89.24.

[52] E.g. *VSym* 79.26–27.

[53] E.g. *VSym* 81.13–4 and 85.24.

[54] E.g. *VSym* 82.12 and 94.25–95.2.

[55] *VSym* 89.20–22: ἦν γὰρ ποιῶν ἑαυτὸν ποτὲ μὲν κοξαρίζοντα, ποτὲ δὲ πηδῶντα, ποτὲ δὲ συρόμενον εἰς τὰ καθίσματα, ποτὲ δὲ βάλλοντα πόδα τινὶ τρέχοντι καὶ ῥίπτοντα αὐτόν.

Moreover, by speaking in riddles and scandalizing or insulting his interlocutors, Symeon can perform his edifying work without detection.[56]

PLOT

All three saints discussed in this chapter engage in practices that support the dissimulation of certain aspects of their identities and/or establish the performance of another identity. At the same time, the particularities of each performance differ as a result of each text's particular narration strategies. Moreover, in the *Life of John*, the saint's performance is further interwoven with the narrative's construction as it is made operative on the level of the plot as a driving force that provokes narrative development. The plotline roughly follows a threefold structure involving departure/separation, adventure, and return/recognition. The story thereby subscribes to a universal structure of romance that underlies different types of literature, from the pagan Greek novels to saints' *Lives*.[57] Also the *Life of Theodora* follows this threefold scheme.[58] In John's *Life*, the saint's rhetorical skill and successful ruses inform this prevalent plot-structure as they result in important plot-development: the money John receives from his parents is his means to depart and leave home, and the Bible he receives becomes the catalyst for the recognition in the end. Thus, the two crucial breaking points in the *Life*'s circular plot, namely the *topos* of 'secret flight' (as Alice G. Elliott calls it[59]) and the recognition, depend on his ability to use subterfuge and on the success of his performance.

In its own way, Theodora's performance is also operative on plot-level. As we have seen, Theodora's rhetoric does not consist of elaborate and sophisticated speech, but of minimalism and ambiguity. It is precisely this quality of Theodora's performance that proves decisive in the crucial turning point of the story. When Theodora is falsely accused of fathering a child, she hardly defends herself, but merely says "I am not responsible" (οὐκ ἔχω πράγμα).[60] Once again, she simply tells the truth, in three little words. Theodora's performance strategy has serious consequences; it leads to her punishment. Things take a different turn in, for instance, the *Life and Martyrdom of Eugenia* (BHG 607w–z), another cross-dresser's tale in which the saint is falsely accused of

[56] I do not go into detail with regard to Symeon's performance strategy because the main aspects of it have been discussed by others; e.g. Krueger 1996, 43–52 and Déroche 2000, 52–59.

[57] The structure of romance has famously been described by Northrop Frye (1976). Its applicability to hagiography is demonstrated by A. G. Elliott (1987). See also Boulhol 1996, who focuses on the final stage of the threefold plot-structure, the recognition scene. Further on recognition see Eriksen above.

[58] See Papaconstantinou 2004, 67 and 70.

[59] Elliott 1987, 85.

[60] *VTheo* 36.2.

sexual harassment. Eugenia's reaction stands in stark contrast to that of Theodora; after a highly rhetorical speech, she dramatically unveils her breasts, showing the proof of her innocence. In the *Life of Theodora*, on the contrary, the saint submits to the punishment. As such, the fake crime she is accused of as a man functions as a stand-in for the real crime she committed as a woman and allows her to atone for the latter one. The performance of the saint in the *Life of Theodora* is thus made functional for its plot because it allows to postpone the moment of recognition and the trials to continue; as such, Theodora's performance helps to underline the story's message of penitence.

The *Life of Symeon*, finally, also entails flight from the world and return/recognition.[61] Initially, Symeon seeks confinement in the desert. Moreover, his turning to the city of Emesa does not necessarily imply a return to society, as his performances of folly place him rather at the margins or even outside of society. Like Theodora, it is only after his death that Symeon is recognized for who he really is. If in the previous two *Lives* the saint's performance is made functional within the plot-structure of separation and reunion, in the *Life of Symeon*, the saint's performance does something else. Rather than triggering narrative development, Symeon's acts of foolery constitute the entire second half of the narrative. From the moment he enters Emesa until the moment he dies, his performance guides the story from one episode into the next,[62] functioning as the backbone of the narrative, which takes the form of a paratactic concatenation of scenes. Symeon's performance is much more involved with creating a false identity than with hiding his real one. He actively seeks out his audience, unlike John and Theodora, whose performance is triggered only when confronted with an audience that cannot know their true identities in order to reach their goals. Symeon's goal is precisely to act like a fool and thereby to save souls. As a result, his performance does not inform the cyclical movement of separation and recognition, which becomes much less accentuated in this *Life* compared to the other two *Lives*. If in the *Lives* of John and Theodora the saint's performance is made operative on the level of plot, it also somehow remains subject to it. In the *Life of Symeon*, the saint's performance takes over as it dictates the narrative's structure.

[61] See Krueger 1996, 37–38 for how the *Life of Symeon* adheres to and deviates from patterns established in classic hagiographical texts.

[62] A new episode often begins with a reference to the saint's performance, e.g. "it was the saint's habit to enter into the houses of the wealthy and clown around" (VSym 85.10–11), or "often he skipped and danced, holding hands with one dancing-girl" (VSym 88.29), or "for sometimes when Sunday came, he took a string of sausages and wore them" (VSym 94.26).

AUDIENCE

An important literary feature of narratives about saints in disguise, triggered in particular by the fact that their stories deal with a performing saint, is their conscious play on the knowledge-level of different members of the saint's audience. That audience consists of both the intra-diegetic audience (i.e. the other characters in the story) and the extra-diegetic audience, the reader, who witnesses not only the saint's performance, but also the narrative's textual performance.

In the first place, telling a story about a disguised saint creates an opportunity to play on a difference between the level of knowledge of the reader, who is in on the reality of the saint's identity and knows what hides behind his/her performance,[63] and the characters in the story, who usually are not. In the first part of the *Life of John*, when the saint invents different ruses to deceive the intra-diegetic audience, the only character who is fully aware of John's intentions is the monk who helps him escape. The lack of knowledge of his father and mother, on the other hand, leads to wrong impressions on their part. When John asks them for a Bible, his mother interprets this as devotion to his worldly education, and "is delighted".[64] This remark takes on extra significance when we take into account the knowledge of the reader. Throughout the narrative, the reader is informed about John's plans, for example through his conversations with the monk, but sometimes also through the representation of internal dialogue.[65] In the example here, the discrepancy between the knowledge of the reader and that of the characters leads to an effect of dramatic irony:[66] when the text says that John's mother "is delighted" when he asks for a Bible, the reader knows that she would not be if she knew the real purpose of John's request (becoming a monk and leaving her).

The *Life of Theodora* engages in a similar play on the difference in the knowledge-level of the characters (who have no knowledge concerning the real identity of the saint) and of the reader (who does). The fact that the other monks in the monastery do not know about Theodora's female nature becomes evident in their direct speech, in which they refer to her by using male pronouns.[67] Again, such instances help to create a certain irony for the reader, especially when the characters' misconceptions lead to the

[63] For most narratives about disguised saints this is indeed the case. Exceptions are first-person narrations, such as the *Life of Pelagia* (BHG 1478), where the reader has access to the same information as (part of) the text-internal audience. About the *Life of Pelagia* Ruth Webb comments that, while usually the reader knows more than the characters, in the narrative of Pelagia, "we the readers must imitate the characters within the story and trust what we are told" (2008, 212).

[64] *VJohn* 6.37–8: Ἀκούσασα δὲ ἡ μήτηρ αὐτοῦ ἐχάρη ὅτι οὕτως φιλοπόνως ἔχει περὶ τὴν μάθησιν.

[65] E.g. *VJohn* 6.26: λέγει ἐν ἑαυτῷ.

[66] Krueger already observes that this is a common feature of stories about concealed sanctity (1996, 71 point 7).

[67] E.g. *VTheo* 28.4: δεχόμεθα αὐτὸν.

paradoxical outcome of a woman being accused of fathering a child. At the same time, the irony adds to the reader's deep experience of the saint's humility *and* it builds up narrative tension, anticipating some kind of resolution at the end. All these effects are constructed by the appearance of male pronouns referring to the saint in the direct speech of the other characters. Even more striking, however, is that male pronouns referring to Theodora occasionally also appear outside of the other characters' direct speech, in narrator-text.[68] Whereas the narrator of the *Life of Theodora* nearly always refers to the saint with female pronouns, suddenly, when Theodora enters the monastery, the narrator says that "the abbot took *him* in his cell and said to *him*" (ἔλαβε δὲ αὐτὸν ὁ ἀρχιμανδρίτης ἐν τῷ κελλίῳ αὐτοῦ καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ).[69] Here, the male pronoun does something else; it achieves an effect of focalisation by presenting the events from the perspective of the other characters who perceive Theodora as a man; in this case the perspective of the abbot.[70] The narrator switches again to female pronouns to refer to Theodora once the scene has ended,[71] thus resuming his position as omniscient narrator. The sudden switch from female to male pronouns to refer to the protagonist in narrator-text is marked (one could even say that the reader is confronted with a changed 'appearance' of the text, whose narrator takes on some kind of disguise) and therefore clearly highlights the text's performance: it temporarily disregards the difference in the level of knowledge between intra-diegetic and extra-diegetic audience and invites the reader to forget, at least for the duration of the scene, the real identity of the saint (as the narrator seemingly does). The text thus merges the two levels of performance as the reader identifies with the intra-diegetic audience.

Another form of textual performance that involves a play on the knowledge-level of the audience is not concerned with what the intra-diegetic and the extra-diegetic audiences know, but builds on differences between different members of the intra-diegetic audience. In the *Life of John*, as we saw, there is one character in particular who knows more than others: the monk who helps John escape. However, the narrative construction of this *Life* seems to rely not so much on the fact that the knowledge-levels of some

[68] This phenomenon is shared by other texts on cross-dressing saints; I give an overview of the occurrence of pronoun-shifts in Greek *Lives* of cross-dressers in a book chapter which is currently under preparation on "Focalisation, immersion and fictionalisation" in which I discuss and interpret this phenomenon.

[69] *VTheo* 28.8.

[70] Another example is found in *VTheo* 32.4–7, where the scene is focalized from the perspective of a group of soldiers who encounter the saint: ὁ δὲ ἀπελθὼν [...] καὶ εἶπον αὐτῷ οἱ στρατιῶται [...] ὁ δὲ εἶπεν [...]. For further discussion of pronoun-shifts in cross-dressers' *Lives* in terms of focalisation, as well as on the occurrence of male pronouns in versions of the *Life of Theodora* other than the text given in Wessely's edition, I refer once again to the chapter I am preparing (see note 68).

[71] *VTheo* 29.1: ἡ δὲ δεξαμένη [...].

characters differ, but rather on the fact that they do not. John's father and mother have the same level of knowledge concerning John's intentions and identity throughout the narrative, and yet in the second part of the *Life*, when John returns home disguised as a beggar, his performance leads to different reactions of each. This contrasts with the beginning of the narrative, where the narrator repeatedly mentions that John's parents are in agreement concerning everything they provide for their son, thereby emphasizing their like-mindedness.[72] However, before his departure, John's father is never a direct witness of his son's performance: each time John wants to obtain something, he approaches his mother alone, who easily falls for his false excuses related to prestige and humiliation. She then tells her husband and persuades him to agree. When John appears as a beggar in front of his parents' house for the first time, on the other hand, both parents are equal witnesses of John's performance, and strikingly, this leads to very different reactions of each. While John's father takes pity on the beggar who lives on his porch and sends him food, his mother has him dragged away.[73] Contrary to the mother, who remains blind until the very end, John's father understands that God acts through his secret servants.[74] He is also the one who recognizes the Bible and who realises that they should fulfil John's last wishes and bury him in his beggar's clothes. When John approaches his mother alone once more right before his death, the situation we found in the first part of the narrative is reversed: this time, when the mother reports to her husband what the saint told her, it is the father who persuades the mother to do as the saint says. The difference in character between John's father and mother is highlighted by the fact that they react very differently when witnessing the same performance with the same level of knowledge. Moreover, through the careful selection of his audience, John's performance further plays into the disparate characterization of the two most important secondary characters, as it allows to highlight gradual character development in the figure of the father, and at the same time mark out the contrast with the figure of the mother, who, even after having recognized her son, has not yet learned the lesson her husband had understood already long ago.

Like the *Life of John*, the *Life of Symeon* engages in a literary game that is concerned with what the different members of the intra-diegetic audience know. In this case, the game depends on the fact that not all characters have the same knowledge-level; some

72 E.g. *VJohn* 8.5: Καὶ ἤρεσεν ἀμφοτέρους ἡ βουλὴ αὕτη. The text in PG 114, 572 reads: ἤρεσκεν ἡ βουλὴ αὕτη ἀμφοτέρῳ. The dual form seems to enhance even more the representation of the two characters as a unity.

73 *VJohn* 11.3–9.

74 *VJohn* 11.5–6: δυνατὸς ἐστιν ὁ Θεὸς δι' αὐτοῦ σῷσαι καὶ ἡμᾶς. This thematic focus aligns the *Life of John* with other hagiographical tales discussed by Ivanov 1998 and in particular with the *Narrations* by Daniel of Sketis, discussed by Dahlman 2007, 70–89.

know more than others. Generally, the people in Emesa, the audience of Symeon's act of folly, believe Symeon to be an actual madman. However, apart from Symeon's close friend John the deacon, who knows from the beginning who Symeon really is, other citizens sometimes also acquire a higher level of knowledge than everybody else. For example, the poushka-seller and his wife accidentally witness Symeon burning incense in his hands without being hurt by the heat.[75] As soon as Symeon notices he has company, he starts shaking his hands and pretends he is burnt, but to no avail. Another time, a certain man accidentally sees Symeon conversing with two angels, thus realizing that Symeon is no fool indeed.[76] These events are what we may call 'inopportune intrusions' into the 'backstage' area; they seem beyond the saint's control and create some kind of 'disruption' of his performance as fool.[77] However, inevitably, those citizens who are edified by Symeon also start realizing he is not a fool, but a saint.[78] Such insights are a threat to Symeon's reputation as well, and point at the inherent paradox that his performance involves: he wants to edify the citizens, but he does not want to be recognized as a holy person. This is why Symeon often tries to save his performance by immediately performing an act of foolery, either in reaction to disruptive events or after edifying a person.[79] For instance, when the tavern-keeper is edified, Symeon pretends to assault his wife.[80] Other times, more drastic measures are taken, in which case he silences the character who knows about his holiness either through violence or with the help of God, so that (s)he will not spread his secret (he miraculously seals the

[75] *VSym* 80.20–81.1.

[76] *VSym* 88.12–14.

[77] I borrow the terms 'inopportune intrusion', 'backstage' and 'disruption' from Erving Goffman (1990^4 [1959]), who discusses performance in everyday life. He emphasizes that at any time events may occur that 'disrupt' the performance, "discrediting or contradicting the definition of the situation that is being maintained" (1990^4, 231–2). Apart from 'unmeant gestures', other types of disruptive events are 'inopportune intrusions', 'faux pas' and 'scenes' (Goffman 1990^4, 203–6). The 'backstage' or 'back region' is defined by Goffman as a place "where action occurs that is related to the performance but inconsistent with the appearance fostered by the performance", opposed to the 'front region', "where a performance is or may be in progress" (1990^4, 135).

[78] Of course, such realizations are often paired with a lot of doubt and speculation on the part of the citizens, e.g. *VSym* 90.11–13.

[79] Symeon's efforts to save his reputation as a fool can be understood within the framework of Goffman's concept of 'impression management'; to avoid disruptions of the performance, which threaten the reality sponsored by it, performers rely on different techniques and 'preventive practices', "employed for saving the show" (1990^4, 207), as well as 'corrective practices', "employed to compensate for discrediting occurrences that have not been successfully avoided" (24).

[80] *VSym* 81.25–82.4. Another example occurs when the slave-master who is edified by Symeon suspects that Symeon only pretends to be crazy: Symeon "immediately played the fool and pretended that he did not know what the man was saying" (*VSym* 96.6–7).

lips of the man who saw him conversing with the angels, for instance).[81] Nevertheless, it is always stated explicitly that the citizen's inability to speak about what happened to him/her only lasts as long as the saint is alive, and that after his death, (s)he proclaims the story openly.[82] In the *Life of Symeon*, then, knowledge about the saint's true identity on the part of another character functions as an assurance of transmission of the saint's (story of) sanctity;[83] the narrator can refer to this knowledge as a source of information on the saint's conduct, which allows him to deal with the inherent paradox involved in the performance, not of the saint, but of the text, namely to tell the story of a *secret* saint. The same mechanism underlies the whole text through the foreknowledge of John the deacon, who functions as the "témoin bien informé," to use Hippolyte Delehaye's famous expression.[84] The narrator claims to have heard the story of Symeon from John the deacon, who is presented as a close friend of Symeon and thus as a reliable source. In the *Life of Symeon*, then, the text's performance involves a strategy of establishing authorization and narrative reliability; by cleverly using the intra-diegetic audience, the text builds up its own credibility towards the extra-diegetic audience and deals with the problem inherent in telling a story of something secret and unknown. We may wonder why this text-internal authentication strategy, which builds on the intra-diegetic audience, occurs in the *Life of Symeon* and not in the *Lives* of John and Theodora: the disguised nature of the latter's real identities eventually poses the same problem to their hagiographers, namely how to justify that knowledge about the saint's secret identity which qualifies them to put it down into a narrative. Apparently, in the case of the beggar saint and the cross-dresser, this was not perceived as a problem in the way that it was for the holy fool. The reason may be that what is concealed in the case of these disguised saints is something else than what is concealed in Symeon's case; the holy fool, as we saw, is a 'secret saint' in the strict sense of the term, as it is his holiness which is concealed. Whereas in the case of John and Theodora, the recognition scene provides certain proof of the real identity of the saint (the cross-dresser's body undoubtedly ensures her female nature, and the parents' recognition of their son is confirmed by the Bible which functions as final material proof), holiness is a more fluid concept for which there may never be absolute proof (is he a saint or a possessed madman?), which means that the truth of Symeon's sanctity lying underneath his

[81] Another example is *VSym* 87.15–17, where Symeon burns the lips of the men who witness his gift of prophecy.

[82] And indeed: "But when they opened the grave, they did not find him. For the Lord had glorified him and translated him. *Then all came to their senses*, as if from sleep, and told each other what miracles he had performed for each of them and that he had played the fool for God's sake" (*VSym* 102.26–29, my emphasis).

[83] See also Krueger 1996, 70 (point 1).

[84] Delehaye 1966, 182.

performance of folly needs to be confirmed by other sources. The occurrence of disruptions of the saint's performance helps do that, as they result in a higher level of knowledge of some characters compared to others, ensuring the transmission of his story.[85] At the same time, the paradox of the text and the paradox of the saint's performance are inextricably related, as Symeon's performance implies some kind of double game of spreading deception and truth at the same time.

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, I set out to analyse and compare the role of the disguised saint's 'performance' in the narrative construction of three *Lives*; the *Life of John Kalyvites*, the *Life of Theodora of Alexandria* and the *Life of Symeon Salos*. Discussing the interplay between intra-diegetic performance and 'textual performance,' I wanted to show how these texts generate an interesting play on the different levels of performance the reader witnesses.

Whereas such or similar observations have occasionally been made with regard to *Lives* of cross-dressers and holy fools,[86] in fact, they apply to a larger group of Byzantine hagiographical tales that feature disguised identity. By reading the *Life of John Kalyvites* alongside a *Life* of a cross-dresser and a holy fool, we were able to observe certain narrative and structural similarities between these *Lives* that go beyond a mere thematic focus on disguised identity. Furthermore, this parallel reading has allowed us to demonstrate, firstly, that the literary portrayal of the saints' performances varies in accordance

[85] The *Life of Theodora* does not feature any disruptions of the saint's performance, even if the story presents a convenient opportunity for a dramatic turn of events towards the end of the narrative when a couple of monks listen in on a conversation between Theodora and the child, at which point Theodora does not realise she has an audience (*VTheo* 41). As readers, we might expect that this 'inopportune intrusion' of audience members into the 'backstage' of the saint's performance will constitute the way in which the intra-diegetic audience will find out about the saint's real sex. In the privacy of her cell, Theodora could be expected to drop her guard and display behaviour contradicting her performance as a male monk. However, she does not reveal anything. We have seen that the narration of Theodora's performance mainly promotes truth rather than deception; in this light, the lack of disruptions is less surprising. In the *Life of John*, in which the saint's performance has much more to do with deception, two disruptions occur, both due to a lack of self-control on the part of the saint, who bursts out in tears when seeing his parents (*VJohn* 10.35–36 and 12.20–21). The first is visible only to the readers, not to the intra-diegetic audience, and the second occurs right before John reveals his identity and dies. Therefore, these disruptions mainly serve to emphasize John's emotional predicament towards the reader and are active on the level of characterization.

[86] Arietta Papaconstantinou (2004) argues for the *Life of Theodora* that the narrative practises a 'double entendre' as it is erotic in a dissimulated way, rendering the text itself in a way transvestite and ambivalent, like its protagonist. As such, she aligns the saint's performance and textual performance through a focus on the *Life*'s erotic dimension.

with the narrative strategies of each text and coincides with the narrative's textual performance in the case of the disguised saint's direct speech. Secondly, it demonstrated the way in which the saint's performance can be made operative on the level of plot, for instance as a driving force within the universal narrative structure of separation-adventure-recognition (in the case of both the *Life of John* and the *Life of Theodora*). In the *Life of Symeon*, the saint's performance takes over as it is elevated to plot level, dictating the structure of the narrative. Finally, we have seen that all three *Lives* exploit the double audience of the saint's performance (the intra- and extra-diegetic audience) for certain literary effects. The saint's performance informs the text's literary game of taking perspective, creating irony through detachment between the two audiences, or, on the contrary, identification through focalisation. A play on the knowledge level of the intra-diegetic audience of the saint's performance can inform the narrative's processes of characterization, and finally, the intra-diegetic audience can be used as a source for textual self-justification towards the extra-diegetic audience.

The three *Lives* discussed here thus help to illustrate the way in which writing a story of performance (i.e. role-playing and disguised identity) allows and sometimes requires the text to 'perform' accordingly. I do not want to claim that the narrative mechanisms I have discussed are exclusively found in *Lives* of saints in disguise, but the analysis at least helps to create insight into how Christian narratives on disguised saints work. Moreover, by including the *Life of John Kalyvites* in the discussion, we could not only broaden our perspective on the topic but also refine it through a more detailed differentiation between different types of disguise and performance in hagiography. In any case, the fascination of Greek hagiographical literature for the *topos* of secrecy and concealed identity can be understood as contributing to sophisticated, but perhaps above all entertaining narratives.[87]

[87] I am grateful to the participants of the research seminar at the Sorbonne led by Professor Bernard Flusin for their comments on an early version of this chapter and for encouraging me to continue the research. I would like to thank the editors of this volume for their invitation to contribute to it, as well as Professor Koen De Temmerman and Professor Kristoffel Demoen for their invaluable feedback. This article was made possible by the support of both the ERC Starting Grant "Novel Saints" at Ghent University (Grant Agreement 337344) and the FWO Flanders.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

The Life of John Kalyvites. Ed. O. Lampsides, "Βατικανοί κώδικες περιέχοντες τον βίον αγίου Ιωάννου του Καλυβίτου", *Archeion Pontou* 28, Athens 1966, 3–36.

The Life of Symeon Salos. Eds A. J. Festugière and L. Rydén, *Vie de Syméon le Fou et Vie de Jean de Chypre*. Paris 1974–1977. Tr. D. Krueger, *Symeon the Holy Fool. Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City*. Berkeley and Los Angeles 1996.

The Life of Theodora of Alexandria. Ed. K. Wessely, "Die Vita s. Theodorae", in *Fünfzehnter Jahresbericht des K. K. Staatsgymnasiums in Hernals*. Vienna 1889, 25–44.

Secondary sources

Austin, J. L. 1962. *How to Do Things with Words*. Cambridge.

Baguenard, J.-M. 1988. *Les Moines acémètes. Vies des saints Alexandre, Marcel et Jean Calybite*. Bégrolles-en-Mauges.

Bazerman, C. 2003. "Textual performance: where the action at a distance is" *JAC* 23.2, 379–396.

Berns, U. 2009. "The concept of performativity in narratology. Mapping a field of investigation" *EJES* 13.1, 93–108.

Boulhol, P. 1996. *Anagnorismos. La scène de reconnaissance dans l'hagiographie antique et médiévale*. Aix-en-Provence.

Bousset, W. 1922. "Der verborgene Heilige" *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 21, 1–17.

Capron, L. 2013. *Codex hagiographiques du Louvre sur papyrus (P.Louvre Hag.)*. Paris.

Constantinou, S. 2005. *Female Corporeal Performances. Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women*. SBU 9, Uppsala.

——— 2014. "Holy Actors and Actresses: fools and cross-dressers as the protagonists of saints' lives", in Efthymiadis (ed.) 2014, 343–62.

Dahlman, B. 2007. *Saint Daniel of Sketis. A Group of Hagiographic Texts Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. SBU 10, Uppsala.

Davis, S. J. 2002. "Crossed Texts, Crossed Sex: intertextuality and gender in early Christian legends of holy women disguised as men", *JECS* 10.1, 1–36.

Delehaye, H. 1966. *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*. Brussels.

Déroche, V. 1995. *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis*. SBU 3, Uppsala.

——— 2000. *Syméon Salos : le fou en Christ*. Paris.

Efthymiadis, S. (ed.) 2014. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography, vol. 2: Genres and Contexts*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington VT.

Elliott, A. G. 1987. *Roads to Paradise. Reading the Lives of the Early Saints*. Hanover and London.

Flusin, B. 2004. "Le serviteur caché ou le saint sans existence", in Odorico and Agapitos (eds) 2004, 59–71.

Frye, N. 1976. *The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance*. Cambridge.

Goffman, E. 1990^{4} [1959]. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. London.

Hotchkiss, V. R. 1996. *Clothes Make the Man: Female Cross Dressing in Medieval Europe*. London and New York.

Hutter, I. (ed.) 1984 *Byzanz und der Westen: Studien zur Kunst des europäischen Mittelalters*. Vienna.

Iser, W. 1993. *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*. Baltimore.

Issacharoff, M. and R. F. Jones (eds) 1988. *Performing Texts*. Philadelphia.

Ivanov, S. A. 1998. "From 'secret servants of God' to 'fools for Christ's sake' in Byzantine hagiography" *Византийский временник* 55, 188–94.

Krueger, D. 1996. *Symeon the Holy Fool. Leontius's Life and the Late Antique City*. Berkeley and Los Angeles.

Lubinsky, C. L. 2013. *Removing Masculine Layers to Reveal a Holy Womanhood. The Female Transvestite Monks of Late Antique Eastern Christianity*. Turnhout.

MacLean, M. 1988. *Narrative as Performance. The Baudelairean Experiment*. London and New York.

Mango, C. 1984. "A Byzantine hagiographer at work: Leontios of Neapolis", in Hutter (ed.) 1984, 25–41.

Odorico and Agapitos (eds) 2004. *La vie des saints à Byzance: genre littéraire ou biographie historique? HERMENEIA. Actes du deuxième colloque international philologique (Paris, juin 2002).* Dossiers Byzantins 4, Paris.

Papaconstantinou, A. 2004. " 'Je suis noire, mais belle' : le double langage de la *Vie de Théodora d'Alexandrie, alias* abba Théodore" *Lalies* 24, 63–86.

Petrey, S. 1990. *Speech Acts and Literary Theory*. London and New York.

Rydén, L. 1995. *The Life of St Andrew the Fool.* 2 vols. SBU 4, Uppsala.

——— 2004. "Literariness in Byzantine saints' Lives", in Odorico and Agapitos (eds) 2004, 49–58.

Stebbins, C. E. 1973. "Les origins de la légende de saint Alexis", *RBPh* 51.3, 497–507.

Von Contzen, E. 2016. *The Scottish Legendary. Towards a Poetics of Hagiographic Narration*. Manchester.

Webb, R. 2008. *Demons and Dancers: Performance in Late Antiquity*. Cambridge MA and London.

Wirth, U. (ed.) 2002. *Performanz: zwischen Sprachphilosophie und Kulturwissenschaft*. Frankfurt am Main.

9

CHANGING THE RHYTHM TO CHANGE THE SOCIETY: NARRATIVE TIME IN *THE LIFE OF JOHN VATATZES* (BHG 933)

Lorenzo M. Ciolfi

From the second half of the thirteenth century onwards, literary sources have bequeathed a multifaceted image of the emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes (1222–1254), an image in which history, myth and propaganda are tightly intertwined.[1] Among these texts, particularly important were two *Lives* pivoting on the same hagiographical sources: the Βίος τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου βασιλέως τοῦ Ἐλεήμονος (BHG 933), written in the third quarter of the fourteenth century by George of Pelagonia,[2] and an anonymous Βίος τοῦ ἁγίου βασιλέως Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βατάτση τοῦ Ἐλεήμονος τοῦ ἐν Μαγνησίᾳ, put together at the end of the seventeenth century and discovered – 'metaphrased' – by Nikodemos the Hagiorite probably during the preparatory research for the entry related to Vatatzes in his own version of the Constantinopolitan *Synaxarion*.[3]

In this chapter I shall focus only on the Byzantine *Life*, whose intricate *mélange* of hagiographical, polemical and encomiastic elements has led modern scholars to different interpretations. Some have regarded the text as a specimen of imperial panegyric;[4]

1 This aspect has been analyzed in Ciolfi 2014.

2 Its author, George of Pelagonia (PLP 4117), is a little-known writer to whom is attributed also a treatise Against Palamas (in Ambr. gr. 223, ff. 107r–139r; ed. I. Polemis 2012 for the *Corpus Christianorum – Series Graeca*), a grammatical treatise (in Petr. gr. 489) and the short sermon *On the conditions of the empire under the pressure of the enemies* (in Vat. gr. 579, ff. 251r–259r). These texts lie at the heart of my current research and will be included, with translation and commentary, in my PhD thesis.

3 This work is the result of the juxtaposition of two different blocks, the first being linked to the Byzantine 'hagiographic' dossier and the latter, a sort of short appendix, witnessing in first person the story of a miracle performed by Vatatzes through his icon on the island of Tenedos. This *Life* was published by the metropolitan of Ephesos Constantine Agathangelos at the end of Nikodemos's *akolouthia* (see Agathangelos 1872, 30–56), but the editor did not report any further specification concerning its origin or finding.

4 Whilst he underlines the *Life's* component of harsh criticism against the élite of George's time, Dimiter Angelov believes the text to be a "panegyrical biography" (Angelov 2007, 266).

others have seen it in the light of the official approval of John III's sainthood, which in reality had rather extra-Byzantine dimensions, both in time and in space.[5] By contrast, I have demonstrated that George of Pelagonia's work is, in terms of its function, a political pamphlet, an inverted *speculum principis*, with the peculiar features of a hagiography: by this *Life* in fact the author criticizes the widespread corruption and severe incompetence of the ruling class of his time by contrasting it to the virtuous life and successful deeds of Vatatzes.[6]

As a complement to the aforementioned studies, in this article I shall approach the text from a narratological point of view. Such a method may contribute to a deeper insight into the *Life*'s structure and thus allow us to define not only the compositional scheme but also the storytelling strategies used by the author, which could in turn be useful for investigating his activity and other literary works written by him. Could narratology help us determine and confirm, once and for all, the function of this peculiar *Life*? For the present analysis I shall focus on time – "the second most important main constituent of a narrative"[7] – and start by reconstructing the overall multi-layered structural arrangement of the work. Then, highlighting the author's use of the temporal order, I shall move on to discuss two particular episodes in the *Life*, where changes in the handling of rhythm seem to offer us unequivocal indications towards a correct interpretation of its function.

In his work, George always seems to have a clear awareness of time and temporal sequence, even if he prefers to leave the moment of the *Life*'s production indefinite. Configuring himself as the extradiegetic narrator of the account,[8] he places the composition of the Βίος τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου after the death of the Nicene emperor and states that little time has passed from Vatatzes to the time when George was writing.[9] Hence, the readers find themselves in a story characterized by a non-selective concretization

[5] A similar function for the *Life* is argued in Papayianni 2004, where, however, the text is simply defined as an *enkōmion* to Vatatzes. Apart from the attempts of adding an aura of sainthood to the figures of the emperor of Nicaea and his grandson John IV, which were made under emperor Andronikos II (1282–1328), Vatatzes was officially recognized as a saint only during the seventeenth century; this phenomenon was most likely connected to the creation – or restoration – by the Greek community in the Manisa region of a symbol representing their own cultural roots and religious identity (see Ciolfi 2014, 279–80 and especially Ciolfi 2017).

[6] See Ciolfi 2015.

[7] de Jong 2007, 1.

[8] It corresponds with the heterodiegetic narrator of Genette, "the narrator absent from the story he tells" (Genette 1980, 244–45).

[9] *VJohn* 3: οὐ γὰρ πολὺς χρόνος ἐς ἡμᾶς ἐξ ἐκείνου. Almost a century having passed, this statement, deriving most likely from George's sources, stimulates consideration of the time perception of the author.

of time and by a subsequent narrating time, as one would normally expect in a past tense narrative.[10] Nevertheless, time becomes a serious concern for the author when related to the question of the account's veracity. None of his readers should be doubtful about the truthfulness of the narrative, on the basis of which both Vatatzes' virtue and George's message are conveyed and take their strength. In this respect, then, realizing that time long past creates "our difficulty of knowing if an event unsupported by evidence has any truth in it", and taking at the same time for granted that "it is not possible to hear the same things from those who report about them, narrating their deeds to which they are going to dedicate the intellectual effort (λόγος)",[11] he decides to solve this problem by skipping any theorization and by referring only to events universally accepted as authentic.

From a strictly temporal perspective, there are four layers of time composing the narrative of the Βίος and interacting within the chronologically external framework:

The time of Vatatzes' ancestors – "the story about them being recent."[12] After the *prooimion*, the object of the story is presented through references to the Nicene emperor's parents, vaguely mentioned and celebrated *en passant* as anonymous citizens of the middle class in the Thracian city of Orestiada.[13] The work starts from this level and from the vicissitudes of the main character's ancestors, to be considered as a sort of preamble to Vatatzes' life and an additional proof of his 'genetic' skills and virtues. Following in general Niketas Choniates' *History*, the main source for this section, the author presents the exploits of John Komnenos Vatatzes – who he says is the mysterious grandfather of the future sovereign – and the vicissitudes of his unfortunate sons, Manuel and Alexios, first against the invaders of Asia Minor and then against the tyrannical Andronikos I (1182–1185). Only at this point does the main character finally enter the scene.

The time of Vatatzes' lifetime. This time level is undoubtedly the main one of the entire *Life*, its episodes constituting the core and the point of reference of the whole

[10] The "non-selective" concretization of time has been defined by Alfonso de Toro (in de Toro 2011, 138–39).

[11] *VJohn* 3: ὥσθ' ἡμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν ὁποτέρως ἔχει τὸ ἀληθὲς ἀμάρτυρον ἤδη διὰ πλῆθος χρόνου γενόμενον and οὐδὲ ταὐτὰ περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν λεγόντων ἐνίων ἐστὶν ἀκούειν τῶν τὰς πράξεις ἀφηγουμένων περὶ ὧν αὐτοῖς ὁ πᾶς λόγος.

[12] *VJohn* 8: τῆς κατ' αὐτοὺς ἱστορίας ἐξ ὑπογυίου γεγενημένης.

[13] This silence, together with allusions to the secluded life that the emperor of Nicaea chose to lead away from the capital, is at the basis of Langdon's hypothesis, according to which John III was the fruit of the adulterous relationship between the wife of Alexios III, Euphrosyne Doukaina Kamatera, and an unnamed general of the imperial army (see Langdon 1978, 40–42).

work. As we may expect in such a case, the episodes narrating the life of Vatatzes are not introduced by any specific definition of time and, as a result, are chronologically undefined. In this section, covering the sovereign's life from the service under his predecessor Theodore I (1205–1222) until his own death, greater attention is devoted to John III's religiosity and victorious campaigns in Asia Minor towards the recapture of Constantinople.[14] The author-narrator then pays particular attention to Vatatzes' opposition to the Latins settled along the Bosporos, with whom someone at the Nicene court proposed to stipulate a resolved treaty: at this point the author resorts to an unprecedented monologue by the emperor against the vices and wickedness of the occupants of the City.[15]

The post-mortem time of his miracles – "shortly afterwards."[16] In the final long chapter of the *Life*, the events happening to Vatatzes' corpse include the transport of the coffin from the burial site, the monastery of Sosandra, to Magnesia ad Sipylum under the pressure of the Turks,[17] the recovery of his remains thrown by the occupants from the city walls, the safekeeping of the relics by a pious woman in her own home and the miracles that arose profusely from them, at which point the *Life* hastily comes to an end.[18] The series of events presented in this tier offers some valuable details enabling us to trace the origin and the initial steps of Vatatzes' cult and testifies to the foundation of the small chapel dedicated to him, which seems to have survived until 1922, along the right aisle of the cathedral of Saint Athanasios in Magnesia.[19] The conclusive indication that "now the coffin rests"[20] in the sanctuary of Magnesia is a clever device used by the author to link this level to the one of his own days, making a full circle between the end of the work and its beginning (ring composition; see table below).

[14] However, it should be noted that the author often attributes to John III also some exploits that traditional historiography links instead to Theodore I.

[15] See *VJohn* 30. The insertion of this speech could have served George's strategy to make the account more trustworthy.

[16] *VJohn* 43: χρόνος οὐ πολὺς μετά.

[17] On the localization and the history of this monastery founded by Vatatzes himself, see Mitsiou 2011.

[18] The healing skills of John III as well as his posthumous miracles are the main topic of the *akolouthia* dedicated to him, which is preserved on ff. 38v–47r of the codex Leimonos 124 of the monastery of Saint Ignatios on the island of Lesbos and, even if in a fragmentary state (only the *apolytikion*, the *kontakion* and the *oikos* were copied), on the f. 219v of the British Library Burney 54; see Polemis 1983 and Ciolfi 2017.

[19] Σώζεται τὸ λείψανον αὐτοῦ ἔν τινι κωμοπόλει τῆς Ἐφέσου, ἡ δὲ εἰκὼν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ περικαλλεῖ ναῷ τοῦ ἁγίου Ἀθανασίου τῆς πόλεως Μαγνησίας (Papadopoulos 1890, 267); see also Vatidou 1956, 39 and Constantelos 1992, 64–65.

[20] *VJohn* 43: νῦν ἡ σορὸς κεῖται.

The time of the author – "now".[21] The scattered references to contemporary events which we find outside and within the framework of the narrative allow the author to spread his ideas and make them more influential as a result of the immediate and striking comparison with Vatatzes' deeds: from a heterodiegetic perspective, the author's judgment against the current ruling class is indisputably negative, for their vices and ignorance are said to have caused the subjects' corruption and lethargy, which has then led to the empire's inexorable decline.[22] The most dramatic episode and the focal point of this time level is certainly represented by the particular description of the battle of Pera, on which we will focus shortly.

In the whole *Life* all events are narrated in singulative mode[23] and, even though inserted into the vague chronological schedule of the author/narrator,[24] they follow a logic and sequential order so that fabula and story mostly coincide in the narrative.[25] Notwithstanding, the sequence which should lead the reader in a linear manner through the most significant episodes of the sovereign's life from his birth to his death, as Menander Rhetor prescribed for the structure of the imperial *enkōmia*,[26] is occasionally interrupted by the digressions George uses to launch invectives against his contemporaries, as we can see if we look at the structure of the *Life* in following table:

[21] *VJohn* passim: νῦν.

[22] See Ciolfi 2015.

[23] See Genette 1980, 114–16.

[24] This sense of vagueness appears also as regards the spatial context, which remains indefinite except for very rare occasions, where generic – and still debated – allusions to Asia Minor and Constantinopolitan locations are made.

[25] For the concepts of fabula and story, see Bal 1985, 5: "a story is the content of text, and produces a particular manifestation, inflection, and 'colouring' of a fabula; the fabula is a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors."

[26] In his theory, Menander considered the following steps (in their logical order): origin, birth, upbringing, accomplishments, deeds of war and of peace, virtues – courage, justice, temperance and wisdom. To the encomiastic genre George seems to refer, as the *Life* incipit suggests: "those who praise virtuous and excellent men" (*VJohn* 1: οἱ τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς καὶ σπουδαίους ἄνδρας ἐγκωμιάζοντες). Nevertheless, the author seems not to be particularly interested in the celebration of the emperor, leaving immediately after the praising of this virtuous man "to poets and historians" (*VJohn* 8: εἰς ποιητάς […] καὶ λογογράφους).

§ 1 *frame*	§ 2 *frame*	§ 3	§ 4 *frame*	§ 5 *frame*	§ 6	§ 7 *frame*	§ 8	§ 9	§ 10	§ 11
§ 12	§ 13	§ 14	§ 15	§ 16	§ 17	§ 18	§ 19	§ 20	§ 21	§ 22
§ 23	§ 24	§ 25	§ 26	§ 27	§ 28	§ 29	§ 30	§ 31	§ 32	§ 33
§ 34	§ 35	§ 36	§ 37	§ 38	§ 39	§ 40	§ 41	§ 42	§ 43	§ 44 *frame*

	= time of V.'s ancestors		*= time of V.'s life*		*= time of V.'s miracles*		*= time of the author*

Reading the text, we realise how disjointed the blocks are, sometimes without any introductory conjunctions.[27] The use of ellipsis is constant, making of it one of the most characteristic features of the narrative and its rhythm;[28] there are also numerous cleverly included cases of analepsis and prolepsis in order to make the episodes interact in a more fluid way both with the others and with the frame.[29] When taken into consideration in its entirety, the work appears to be a puzzle made out of episodes, which are simply collated next to each other relying on a sort of Pindaric flight. Nevertheless, such non-accomplished structure could also depend on the peculiar manuscript tradition of the text, a situation which prevents us from knowing whether the *Life* reflects George's final wishes or alternatively his intention to come back to the work to re-elaborate and even out these disjunctions.[30]

27 In this regard, we have to exclude the abstract temporal indicators pointed out above.

28 This concept, introduced in the theory of narrative by Genette, is based on the relationship between the duration of the historical events and the space, relative and absolute, dedicated to them in the plot. According to Genette, in addition to ellipsis authors could intervene on the duration of their narrative – "anisochrony", in his terminology – through pause, summary and scene (see Genette 1980, 86–112).

29 About analepsis and prolepsis, see Genette 1980, 33–85.

30 What we have in the most ancient witness (i.e. Vat. gr. 579, ff. 229r–250v), in fact, turns out to be the author's autograph draft as showed by the comparison of this script with the one of the note on f. Iv in the Ambr. gr. 512 (studied in Prato 1981); philologically speaking, however, our text represents an *in itinere* version, between the first proof copy and the final release (both of them, unfortunately, are lost).

Since no particular strategy seems to have been used concerning chronological order and frequency, the rhythm of the narrative becomes the vital element used by the author to convey his message to the target audience. By doing so, George of Pelagonia may have opted for a peculiar use of this narrative technique and obtained a variation in tempo in his story, not depending on time changes but rather stressing modulations of genre. The author could thus draw attention to all the aspects in which he was interested through digressions into extravagant episodes, whose particular nature and difference from the ordinary context and narrative flow of the *Life* managed to attract the readers, turning their attention wherever he wanted – that is, to a polemic against contemporary society, negatively viewed in comparison with John III's attitude and virtue.

Moreover, the change of rhythm in this *Life* can also be seen in relation to the specific function of narrative tempo in another *Life* of a Byzantine emperor, the tenth-century *Vita Basilii*; in this respect a comparison to the *Life of the Emperor Saint John the Merciful* is fruitful. Theofili Kampianaki has recently demonstrated the tight connection between the thematic and the rhythmical organization of the story in the *Vita Basilii*, and the important role played by it in directing the readers to the intended target of its author. In fact, the purpose of the work is the praise of the Macedonian emperor, obtained by the clever omission of all the embarrassing episodes of the sovereign's life, and resulting consequently in a clear acceleration of tempo.[31]

The following analysis of two episodes of the *Life of John Vatatzes* will demonstrate how such temporal and generic diversions were at the core of its rhythmic changes, in slowing down the tempo, and accordingly supporting the main function of the work.

The first concerns the relationship between John III and his first wife, Irene Laskarina. Historically, the question of succession had a considerable influence on the diplomatic and nuptial choices of Theodore I, who had no male heir to whom he could entrust his empire. Nicholas and John, the two sons with his first wife Anna Angelina Komnene (married in 1199), died in 1212 at a young age for unknown reasons, after being accepted at court as legal successors.[32] Constantine, born in 1214 with his second wife Philippa of Armenia (married in 1214), was too young when his father died and the annulment of his parents' wedding in 1216 was also raised against him and his legitimacy. Finally, the daughter of Peter of Courtenay and Yolanda of Flanders, Maria (married in 1219), from whom Theodore desperately wanted an heir, turned out to be sterile. After combining strategic marriages for his younger daughters as a means of strengthening his

[31] See Kampianaki 2014 and Messis in this volume.

[32] In 1208, the church hierarchy in Nicaea finally recognized Theodore and his sons as emperors, as we can read in a *tomos* signed by patriarch Michael Autoreianos (see Oikonomides 1967, 121–24).

position on the international stage,[33] the time came to think about the oldest one, Irene, at that moment widow of Andronikos Palaiologos.[34] Impressed by the virtues of the *despotēs* and *prōtovestiarios* Vatatzes, and also wanting to consolidate his own authority in Thrakesion,[35] the first emperor of Nicaea gave her hand to John, a *homo novus*; thus he evaded his fear that "after his death [...] everything he had realised with God's help, with such pains and so much time, would be lost and dispersed completely".[36] This was a choice that George of Pelagonia celebrates unreservedly.

In the *Life*, though, many royal descendants from abroad had appeared before the Byzantine emperor as suitors, whereas Theodore I, always wanting to stress his influence on the Asia Minor aristocracy, had clearly expressed his preference for Vatatzes, someone from his own origin, strongly convinced that "a compatriot was better than a stranger".[37] However, just "shortly before the wedding",[38] when the choice had already been made and everything had been prepared, a noble knight from the royal house of Britain appeared.[39] Filled with haughtiness he was convinced that he deserved the Byzantine princess more than any other, just because of his noble blood, and openly defied anyone who did not agree with him. Paying attention only to appearance, "he was full of arrogance and believed to be absolutely invincible",[40] until he ran into John, who was of course ready to face him in a duel.[41] Seeing no possibility of being defeated, the knight happily accepted the challenge. A public arena was set up for the confrontation, and:

[33] Maria (PLP 16893) married the Hungarian king Béla IV in 1220, while Eudokia was promised to Robert of Courtenay; as recalled in Akropolites, *History* 18, this project was impeded by the Church and, before 1230, the princess became the wife of Anseau de Cayeux, the governor of Asia Minor.

[34] Andronikos, who more likely commanded as general the Nicene army, was captured by Henry of Flanders during the siege of Lentiana in 1211 and immediately released; he died soon after this episode (see Macrides 2007, 149–50 n.3).

[35] See Langdon 1978, 57.

[36] *VJohn* 18: μήποτε μετὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ τελευτήν, [...] οἴχηται πάντα καὶ σκεδασθῇ ἃ σὺν πολλῷ πόνῳ καὶ χρόνῳ, θεοῦ ἵλεω ὄντος, αὐτὸς ἐκτήσατο.

[37] *VJohn* 20: τὸ ὁμόφυλον βέλτιον τοῦ ὀθνείου.

[38] *VJohn* 21: μικρῷ δὲ πρότερον πρὸ τοῦ γάμου.

[39] We do not know anything about the identity of this man, ἀδελφιδοῦς τοῦ Βρεττανῶν βασιλέως (nephew of the king of Britain), who does not appear in any of the other sources on Vatatzes. Heisenberg believed he represented a Norman knight coming from northern Europe (see Heisenberg 1905, 186).

[40] *VJohn* 21: ὁ δὲ μέγα ἐπὶ τούτοις ἐφρόνει ᾤετό τε παντάπασιν ἀνίκητος εἶναι.

[41] It may be worth remembering that the duel was one of the two forms – the other being fire – of the trial by ordeal known in Byzantium from the twelfth century (see Cupane 1974 and Angold 1980).

> the battle was hard on both sides, until John had the upper hand and, having overturned his adversary, threw him on the ground. [...] After this defeat, the challenger calmed down and then he did not show up in combat with the arrogance he had before. When he saw that the marriage he desired was celebrated for another, with no hope he came back home.[42]

The ardor of the knight is immediately converted into a kind of quiet and just resignation. The previous and peaceful order is finally re-established, an image which anticipates and to some extent paves the way for the successful actions that Vatatzes will pursue against all his adversaries in all the episodes included in the *Life*.[43]

The parenthetic digression of the episode about the pretender from Britain, although brief, contributes to slow down the rhythm of the story through the introduction of an episode rich in details. This effect is also achieved by a shift in point of view and a use of narrative strategies more typical of other genres. In fact, the mysterious antagonist monopolizes the scene with his action and his overflowing feelings, gaining the centre of attention for the entire development of the episode; Vatatzes, then, "considering unbearable that all our men were won by his arrogance, undertook personally the combat"[44] and in a few moves solves the situation, with an intervention as quick as it was noninvasive. The story, opening at the arrival of the British knight, ends at the departure of the same character in a sort of ring composition; the following chapter returns to the thread of Vatatzes' life.

Also in this case, it is impossible to know whether the inspiration for this duel was already part of the 'vulgate' hagiography of John Vatatzes or if it should rather be ascribed to the literary choices of George.[45] In any case, at this point the plot disconnects from the biographical line followed so far and shifts into a brief romance-like digression, dominated by the features of the Greek novel chronotope: an 'adventure-time' characterized by a sudden event, which guarantees a source for the action.[46]

[42] *VJohn* 21: ἦν ὁ ἀγὼν ἑκατέρωθεν ἰσχυρός, ἕως ὑπερέσχεν ὁ Ἰωάννης καὶ τὸν ἀντίπαλον ἀνατρέψας ὦσεν εἰς τοὔδαφος. [...] Ἐκ δὴ τούτου πληγεὶς ἡσύχασε καὶ οὐκέθ' ἑξῆς μετὰ τῆς πρόσθεν τόλμης εἰς τοὺς ἀγῶνας παρῄει. Ὡς δὲ καὶ ὃν ἤλπισε γάμον πρὸς ἄλλον εἶδε ῥυέντα, ἀπογνοὺς ᾤχετο πρὸς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ.

[43] John III took part in another duel too, which put an end to a fierce battle against the invaders of Asia Minor (see *VJohn* 25).

[44] *VJohn* 21: ἐν δεινῷ θέμενος τὸ τοὺς ἡμετέρους πάντας τῆς ἐκείνου δόξης ἡττᾶσθαι, ἑαυτὸν εἰς τὸν ἀγῶνα καθῆκεν.

[45] The theme of the dispute with a stranger, representing the extra-Byzantine reality (especially for what concerns religion), is quite traditional in the literary products of that society. A good reference for this tendency could be in a well-known episode related in Theophanes Continuatus 3.23 (see Signes Codoñer 132–36).

[46] See Bakhtin 1981, 86–111, in part. p. 92: "'Suddenly' and 'at just that moment' best characterize this type of time, for this time usually has its origin and comes into its own in just those places where the normal, pragmatic and premeditated course of events is interrupted – and provides

Present, albeit fleeting, are the contact points with the themes and forms of the Byzantine romance. The duel motif appears, with some differences, in *Imberios and Margarona*, a transposition in verse of the French *Pierre de Provence et la belle Maguelonne*:[47] the knight loves his lady and his love is reciprocated, but he is obliged to win the tournament that her father had organized to find her a worthy husband; in this case, the final battle is against an arrogant Alamanos.[48] The comparison between the young hero and the proud suitor appears also in other romances dating to the Palaiologan period, although in these contexts – very different from the one of the Βίος – we find the complete subordination of physical combat to the expedient of magic and deception. In *Kallimachos and Chrysorrhoe*, an evil prince resorts to an enchanted apple in order to take Kallimachos out of the game and finally get the attention of the beloved girl; in *Libistros and Rhodamne*, instead, the king of Egypt Berderikos, having lost the hand of the girl in a duel, relies on a witch to kidnap the young woman he loves. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that in all these examples the protagonists of the story form a stable couple well before the antagonist appears on the scene, just as in the *Life* John and Irene are already engaged and just one step from the wedding.[49]

Nevertheless, this zeal of Theodore I to search among "those outside the dynastic line"[50] for the best man for his daughter and for the throne of Byzantium appears to have a twofold function in the scheme of the Βίος. First, it provides a valuable support of George's opposition to the principle of dynastic succession, which was already widely present in the intellectual debate of the fourteenth century.[51] Second, it exalts the anti-Latin and pro-orthodox tendency, a trend which will finally prevail in the

an opening for sheer chance, which has its own specific logic". In the field of Byzantine Studies, important contributions on this aspect are Mullett 2006 and Messis 2014.

47 See Jeffreys & Jeffreys 1971.

48 Charis Messis dedicates some space to this episode in his study of the relationship between romance and Palaiologan hagiography, pointing out the affinities of George's narrative with a similar episode of the Arthurian cycle which was circulating in fourteenth-century Byzantium (see Rizzo Nervo 2000, 5–55, and Messis forthcoming). Notwithstanding, in this episode in the Βίος, there is a quotation from the seventh book of the *Iliad* (the duel between the Trojan Hector and the Greek Ajax): it could add new interpretations, if we consider that such a theme was a widespread metaphor for the contrast between West and East in the late Middle Ages and implied the discussion – and the claims, both spiritual and material – on who was the true descendant of each of these two fronts in the Mediterranean basin.

49 Imberios and Margarona are happily in love (see Kriaras 1955, 197–249); Kallimachos lives with Chrysorrhoe *more uxorio* (see Cupane 1995, 45–213); Libistros and Rhodamne are married (see Agapitos 2006).

50 *VJohn* 18: τοὺς ἔξω.

51 See Angelov 2007, 280–85 and Ciolfi 2015, 100–5. This political position is indeed a characteristic element of the author's personality and will appear in other passages of this work.

post-Byzantine *Life*:[52] in the latter, in fact, the development of this episode points clearly to this direction and turns out to be even more fictionalized, with more space for female agency.[53]

After having passed through the religiosity, philanthropy and clemency of Vatatzes as emperor, and just one step before reporting on his death, George of Pelagonia rushes into a substantial and direct invective – with a Platonic flavor – against his contemporaries, who are concerned only with preserving appearance instead of substance. Since the author misses "the words to denounce the wickedness of men",[54] he opens up one episode of the conflict between the Empire and Genoa: the so-called 'battle of Pera.' This was one of the most shocking military events of the fourteenth century, if we consider that, besides appearing in the *Histories* of Gregoras and Kantakouzenos, it is also the subject of a Λόγος ἱστορικός by Alexios Makrembolites.[55]

In order to curb Venetian expansionism, the treaty of Nymphaeum signed in 1261 by the emperor Michael VIII (1261–1282) granted so many privileges to Genoa that the Ligurian city quickly got complete control of the commercial traffic in the Bosporus, and then in the whole Black Sea area. Realizing the adverse situation, John VI Kantakouzenos (1347–1354), who had just been crowned, immediately acted to safeguard the empire and sponsored the construction of a new fleet, even overcoming the resistance of his aristocrats exhausted by the long years of civil war. At the same time, he decided to lower tariffs for those who chose to unload their ships in Constantinople, thus affecting directly Genoa's income. *Conditio sine qua non* for them to negotiate on this topic was the demolition of the defensive walls of Pera, on the opposite bank of the

[52] See also n. 45 above.

[53] See Agathangelos 1872, 35–39. In this anonymous work, Theodore I showed his preference as son-in-law for a general from his own Latin troops, a certain Conrad, related to William Berto, king of Flanders; in this way not only did he arouse discontent among the members of his court but also annoyed Irene, already in love with the *doux* Vatatzes. Although the empress herself had supported the wishes of the princess, the emperor did not abandon his intention until, having confirmed the marriage with the stranger, the young girl expressed her wish to kill herself rather than marry Conrad. The action passes directly to the duel between the two suitors, who fight: the stranger relying on his physical strength, the Greek on God's help. There is no hope for the general, unhorsed at the first attempt and killed miserably in the second round; it is a real triumph of orthodoxy, and of its champion.

[54] *VJohn* 37: *ῥημάτων, οἷς ἂν ἐνδειξαίμην τὴν φαυλότητα τῶν ἀνθρώπων.*

[55] See Alexios Makrembolites, *Historical speech*, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus. The other historical sources which deal with this event are: Nikephoros Gregoras, *History* 17; John Kantakouzenos, *History* 4.11; *Chronica Byzantina Breviora* 8/50 and 8/51a–b. For further information on the episode, see Nicol 1993, 220–26; Nicol 1996, 95–98; Kyrris 1972, even if he focuses mostly on the continuation of the conflict and on the battle in 1352.

Golden Horn. As expected, its inhabitants categorically refused such a compromise and attacked Constantinople, ravaging its coastal suburbs on 16 August 1348, just when Kantakouzenos, struck by illness, was stuck in Didymoteichon. The Byzantine reaction was not delayed. The emperor travelled back to the capital in early October and accelerated the construction of ships through an extraordinary fundraising initiative that allowed him to get the necessary wood, by land, from the mountains overlooking Sergentzion in Thrace. At the beginning of March of the following year, after having recruited mercenaries in neighbouring cities and suburbs, John VI was finally ready to respond to the Genoese provocations, deploying its contingent by land and by sea in order to surround and subdue Pera.[56]

George does not say a word about this background and, surprising his audience, simply lets his story start *ex abrupto* on such a point of tension:

> when a disagreement broke out between the inhabitants of Constantinople and the Italian neighbours who lived on the opposite shore, the situation degenerated for them so that they thought to solve it by a battle, arriving then to an open war.[57]

Despite the fact that "the townspeople moved one trireme, and also some pentekontors, small ships and numerous other boats filled with archers, slingers and peltasts",[58] an offensive power far greater than the single Genoese trireme that hastily arrived from Chios, events soon turned bad for the Greeks. Because of a sudden, violent storm, as the emperor John VI says in justification, or because the Italians were seen as ferocious enemies, as claimed instead by George of Pelagonia and Gregoras, the imperial sailors were frozen in fear as "seems to happen to those who touch an electric ray".[59] In total confusion, some fell into the water, others would dive in voluntarily wanting to reach as soon as possible a friendly shore; all were killed, drowning under the weight of their

[56] George of Pelagonia's *Life* reported the presence of Italian mercenaries in the Byzantine army and this element has led A. Heisenberg to link this part of the text to the events of 1352, when John VI was defeated by Venetian and Aragonese contingents (see Heisenberg 1905, 162). Nevertheless, Gregoras pointed out that mercenaries fought with the Greeks already during the battle of 1348 (see *History* 17.4).

[57] *VJohn* 38: γενομένης γὰρ διαφορᾶς τοῖς Βυζαντίοις πρὸς τοὺς ἀστυγείτονας τῶν Ἰταλῶν τῶν ἀντιπέρας οἰκούντων, εἰς τοῦτο προῆλθεν αὐτοῖς τὰ πράγματα, ὥστ᾽ἔγνωσαν καὶ διὰ μάχης κριθῆναι καὶ κατέστησαν εἰς πόλεμον φανερόν.

[58] Ibid.: οἱ δ᾽ ἐκ τῆς πόλεως καὶ αὐτοὶ τριήρη μὲν μίαν, πεντηκοντόρους δὲ καὶ ἐπακτροκέλητας καὶ πλοῖα ἄλλα ἀντεπῆγον πολλὰ τοξότας ἄγοντα καὶ πελταστὰς καὶ σφενδονήτας πολλούς.

[59] Ibid.: τι παθεῖν ἔδοξαν τοῖς θιγοῦσι τοῦ ἰχθύος τῆς νάρκης. It is interesting to note that the same image was used by Gregoras, History 17.6: ἐπεὶ δὲ κατὰ μέσην γενόμεναι τὴν πορείαν ἐρήμους ἀνδρῶν ἑλκομένας εἶδον ὑπὸ τῶν πολεμίων τὰς ὁμοφύλους νῆας, ἔστησαν ὥσπερ τινὶ νάρκῃ πεδηθεῖσαι καὶ μὴ δυνάμεναι μήτε πρόσω μήτ᾽ ὀπίσω ποιεῖσθαι τὸν πλοῦν (having realised in the middle of the action that their ships, deprived of sailors, were towed by the enemies, they froze as if they were constrained by an electric ray, unable to navigate forwards or backwards).

armour. At the sight of this bizarre and eerie spectacle in the water, the ground troops started to flee precipitously.

While Kantakouzenos's *History* concludes the episode with the outrage of the enemies, who amused themselves by roaming the Golden Horn and flaunting the imperial banners they had easily recovered in the battle,[60] the *Life* describes the ruthless treatment of the Greek prisoners, for which we do not have any precedent in the sources:

> after having brought them [*the Byzantine soldiers*] into the city, in fact, they [*the enemies*] deprived them – and they were right! – of the clothes they wore as men who bravely face the battle, either because they did not consider them worthy of being dressed like men and to avoid offending the male gender; they dressed them in feminine clothes, for these were more suitable for them. Then they gave them spindles and distaffs, made them walk around the city, ridiculous and rightly covered by mud. Having called some prostitutes, they ordered these ladies to kick the soldiers because it was right that they were humiliated by such women. Thus they threw them into a pit, where they spent the night. At dawn, after taking these miserable ones out, they condemned them to dig a moat around the city and to throw in the sea all the rubbish that was in town and the dung, carrying it on their shoulders.[61]

Forced to wear women's clothes and to walk along the streets of Pera, the soldiers were subjected to all kind of insults and outrages, and the day after they were forced to dig defensive trenches and collect garbage.[62]

[60] See Kantakouzenos, *History* 4.11. The historical reality was then paradoxical. Fortune, in fact, smiled on the Byzantine emperor: after these tragic events, a new pact was signed, obliging the enemies to pay to the empire the sum of 100.000 *hyperpyra* for war damages and to promise not to attack Constantinople again in the future (see Alexios Makrembolites, *Historical speech* 16); the Βίος is silent on this agreement.

[61] *VJohn* 38: ἀπαγαγόντες γὰρ οἴκαδε τοὺς μὲν χιτῶνας, οὓς ἔφερον ὡς κατ᾿ ἄνδρας δῆθεν ἀνδρικῶς ἐσταλμένοι, δίκαια ποιοῦντες περιείλοντο μισήσαντες αὐτοὺς τῆς ἀνανδρίας, ὡς οὐκ ἀξίους ὄντας κατ᾿ ἄνδρας ἐσταλμένους περιιέναι, ἵνα μὴ τὸ τῶν ἀνδρῶν καταισχύνοιεν γένος, γυναικείαν δὲ στολὴν ἐνέδυσαν φέροντες ὡς ταύτῃ μᾶλλον ἐμπρέποντας. Εἶτα καὶ ἄτρακτον σὺν ἠλακάτῃ ταῖς χερσὶ δόντες φέρειν περιῆγον κύκλῳ περὶ τὸ ἄστυ καὶ κατ᾿ ἀγορὰν καταγελάστους καὶ προπηλακιζομένους δικαίως. Καὶ μὴν καὶ τὰς ἑταίρας σφίσιν ἐπαγαγόντες ἐκέλευσαν λὰξ ἐναλέσθαι κατ᾿ ὀσφύων ὡς δικαίων ὄντων καὶ ὑπὸ γυναικαρίων τοιούτων οὕτω καταγελᾶσθαι. Τελευτῶντες δὲ εἴς τινα βόθρον καθῆκαν, οὗ διανυκτερεύσαντας τῆς ἐπιούσης ἅμα ἕῳ τοὺς ἀθλίους ἐξαγαγόντες τάφρον ὀρύττειν περὶ τὸ ἄστυ σφῶν κατεδίκασαν καὶ τὸν ἐν τῇ χώρᾳ πάντα φορυτὸν σὺν τοῖς ἀφοδεύμασι τοῖς ὤμοις φέροντας ῥίπτειν εἰς θάλασσαν.

[62] Such humiliation vaguely recalls what Croesus proposed to Cyrus after the suppressed insurrection of the Lydians led by Paktyes. It consisted in punishing the leader of the revolt and imposing on the population a behaviour change (not bearing weapons, wearing feminine clothes and footwear, playing the *kithara* and plucking string instruments, practising retail trade): "and quickly, O King, you will see them becoming women instead of men. In so doing, you won't fear that they might rise up" (Herodotus, *Histories* 1.155.4). In Byzantine texts effeminacy is often connected to the problem of men's cowardice and the association of men with women's behaviour and activities – whose symbols were spindles and distaffs – represented one of the most offensive insults to their nature and social role: as Messis 2006, 474, argues, "l'homme lâche est pire que les femmes, car la lâcheté féminine est une 'réalité' naturelle, alors que pour l'homme ce comportement con-

Even without taking into consideration the metaphorical value of such punishment, all sources clearly point to a single cause for this military disaster, as Donald Nicol summarized: "they were not sailors at all: most of them had never manned a battleship before and had no experience of seafaring or naval tactics".[63] Acting as sailors and soldiers, but in reality incapable of handling any type of situation, if "we should call such persons men and not treacherous and ruthless beasts, who are victims of their own evil",[64] or again quoting from the same passage of the *Life*, "men and not men, masculine for impiety but effeminate for attitude",[65] as underlined in the prisoners' metamorphosis during their punishment.

In this case, the author resorts to a pause that intervenes in the speed of the narration and regulates its tempo. Similar to what we noted above in the scene of the duel, a shift in genre seems to take place. The digression on the Byzantine defeat, which shocked so many people in that period and remained impressed in the collective memory, causes a clear rupture of the rhythm in Vatatzes' life and obliges the reader to linger on the message that the author consciously left between the lines. The past and glorious vicissitudes of Vatatzes, his victories on the western and eastern frontiers, are interrupted by the account of a tragic contemporary event, the storytelling mode shifting for a moment from the simultaneous narration, commonly used by George in the account of the events of his own time, towards the subsequent one which is prevalent in the *Life*. With a few words the present becomes history, acquiring thus the typical authority and paradigmatic value of the historiographic accounts and serving, again, a very specific purpose. This becomes clear a few lines later in the author's declaration:

> I think it is not fair to blame these people, but those who led them. […] Indolent leaders made their subjects indolent and incapable in everything too. So, they should probably take responsibility for everyone's failure because they made them thus.[66]

stitue la perversion de sa nature 'véritable'". Moreover, recourse to the topic of effeminacy was employed not only to blame and punish cowardly soldiers (negative speech) – as we have seen in this *Life* – but also to spur them on to act bravely, especially during military campaigns (exhortative speech).

[63] In Nicol 1996, 97. The same opinion is asserted by Gregoras, *History* 17.5 and Makrembolites, *Historical speech* 15, this latter attributing the responsibilities of the defeat to the cowardice, the wickedness, the indolence, the injustice and, moreover, the betrayal of the pilots of the ships.

[64] *VJohn* 37: ἀνθρώπους χρὴ καλεῖν τοὺς τοιούτους ἀλλὰ μὴ θηρία τινὰ τῶν ἐπιβούλων καὶ φαύλων, οἵ ταῖς αὑτῶν αὐτοὶ περιπίπτουσι πονηρίαις.

[65] Ibid.: ἄνδρας κοὐκ ἄνδρας, ἀνδρικοὺς μὲν τὴν ἀσέβειαν, τὸν τρόπον δὲ θηλυδρίας.

[66] *VJohn* 39: οἶμαι δὲ μὴ τούτων μᾶλλον προσήκειν κατηγορεῖν ἢ τῶν ἐπιστατῶν. […] Βλάκες τοίνυν ὄντες οἱ ἡγεμόνες βλάκας καὶ τοὺς ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῖς τελοῦντας εἰργάσαντο καὶ ἀχρείους ἐς ἅπαντα. Οὐκοῦν αὐτοὶ φέροιντ᾽ ἂν μᾶλλον τὴν αἰτίαν εἰκότως τῆς τῶν τοιούτων ἁπάντων φαυλότητος, οἱ τοιούτους αὐτοὺς ἀποδείξαντες.

What we have here is yet another evident example of how, exploiting some storytelling strategies, George of Pelagonia turned the modulations between different genres into a voice for his own sharp political criticism.

We can conclude that an analysis of the handling of time and temporal levels in the *Life of John Vatatzes* undoubtedly allows us to better understand this work and its structure, while an overall narratological approach to single passages helps us to fully appreciate the historical context of the text, contributing to safeguard the communicability of the message, as argued by Mikhail Mikhailovich Bakhtin.[67]

By highlighting the four time layers of the *Life*, we can retrace and separate the two main content nuclei from which the work was composed: elements deriving from the hagiography of the ruler of Nicaea (the time of Vatatzes – his ancestors, his deeds, his miracles) and the author's considerations on his contemporary reality (the time of George of Pelagonia, including the frame of the Βίος). When comparing passages of the first nucleus with the account of the post-Byzantine *Life of Saint John*, these results constitute an interesting springboard for further analysis on John III's afterlife.

First, the shared presence of the same episodes (often offering the same onomastics and/or numeric data), completely independent from George's additions, support the hypothesis of the existence of a hagiographic *dossier* on Vatatzes, gathered somewhere close to his tomb already in the years immediately after the ruler's death, most likely in connection to the initial stages of the sovereign's veneration. Then, once this common background to the sources has been identified, the reading of select passages of George's *Life of John Vatatzes* from a narratological perspective, focusing on narrative rhythm and generic shifts, also turns out to offer solid evidence for a new reading of it as something different and more correct than an 'imperial biography' or 'hagiography'.

From the case study presented here, it is clear that George not only selected and bent the material of his sources, but also intervened in the narrative style to serve his precise purpose, making a very particular use of slowing down the rhythm by means of generic shifts, towards romance for the duel episode and towards history for the battle scene: in both cases with the same purpose of stressing his personal voice, and of taking a stance in the political and social debate of his time.

Accordingly, only by including narratology in our set of approaches and methodologies can we expect to fully understand the strategies of the author-narrator, what he suggested to his audience, or to his imaginary interlocutors. Namely, that this sophisticated plot of many times and many stories, the Βίος τοῦ ἁγίου Ἰωάννου βασιλέως τοῦ Ἐλεήμονος, conceals within its temporal strategies one prevalent function: a strong and

[67] See Bakhtin 1986.

vibrant accusation against the Byzantine ruling class in the second half of the fourteenth century.[68]

[68] My gratitude goes to Charis Messis, for his constant support, and to Aglae Pizzone, for her generous suggestions; inspiring remarks were also offered by Juan Signes Codoñer, Renaud Gagné and David Konstan. Unless otherwise specified, translations are mine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Alexios Makrembolites, *Historical Speech*. Ed. A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, Ανάλεκτα Ιεροσολυμιτικής Σταχυολογίας I. St. Petersburg 1891, 144–59.

Chronica Byzantina breviora. Ed. P. Schreiner, *Die byzantinischen Kleinchroniken,* 3 vols. Vienna 1975–1979.

George Akropolites, *History*. Ed. A. Heisenberg, *Georgi Acropolitae historia*. Leipzig 1903.

George of Pelagonia, *Life of the Emperor Saint John the Merciful*. Ed. A. Heisenberg, "Kaiser Johannes Batatzes der Barmherzige. Eine Mittelgriechische Legende" *BZ* 14 (1905) 193–233 (here: *VJohn*).

John Kantakouzenos, *History*. Ed. L. Schopen, *Ioannis Cantacuzeni eximperatoris historiarum libri IV*, 3 vols. CSHB, Bonn 1828–1832.

Nikodemos the Hagiorite, *Akolouthia of Saint John Vatatzes*. Ed. K. Agathangelos, Ἀσματικὴ ἀκολουθία τοῦ ἁγίου βασιλέως Ἰωάννου τοῦ Βατάτζη τοῦ ἐλεήμονος τοῦ ἐν Μαγνησίᾳ. Constantinople 1872.

Nikephoros Gregoras, *History*. Ed. L. Schopen, *Nicephori Gregorae Byzantina historia*, 2 vols. CSHB, Bonn 1829–1830.

Secondary sources

Agapitos, P. (ed.) 2006. *Αφήγησις Λιβίστρου και Ροδάμνης*. Athens.

Angelov, D. 2007. *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330*. Cambridge.

Angiolillo, R., E. Elia and E. Nuti (eds) 2015. *Crisi. Immagini, interpretazioni e reazioni nel mondo greco, latino e bizantino*. Alessandria.

Angold, M. 1980. "The interaction of Latins and Byzatines during the period of the Latin Empire (1204–1261): the case of the Ordeal", in *Actes du XVe Congrès International des Etudes Byzantines,* vol. 4. Athens, 1–10.

Bakhtin, M. M. 1981. "Forms of time and of the chronotope in the novel", in Holquist and Emerson (eds and trs) 1981, 84–258.

——— 1986. "The problem of speech genres", in Emerson and Holquist (eds) 1986, 60–102.

Bal, M. 1985. *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative.* Toronto, Buffalo and London.

Burke, J. et al. (eds) 2006. *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott.* ByzAus 16, Melbourne.

Ciolfi, L. M. 2014. "John III Vatatzes: History, Myth and Propaganda", in Lau, Franchi and Di Rodi (eds) 2014, 273–88.

——— 2015. "Giorgio di Pelagonia. Un nuovo sguardo sulla crisi dell'era paleologa", in Angiolillo, Elia and Nuti (eds) 2015, 97–108.

——— 2017. "From Byzantium to the Web: the endurance of John III Vatatzes' legacy" *Revue des Études Sud-Est Européennes,* 59–71.

Constantelos, D. J. 1992. *Poverty, Society and Philanthropy in the Late Mediaeval Greek World*. New Rochelle, NY.

Cupane, C. 1974. "Un caso di giudizio di Dio nel romanzo di Teodoro Prodomo" *RSBN* 10–11, 147–68.

Cupane, C. 1995. *Romanzi cavallereschi bizantini*. Torino.

de Jong, I. J. F. and R. Nünlist (eds) 2007. *Studies in Ancient Greek Narrative. 2: Time in Ancient Greek Literature*. Leiden and Boston, MA.

de Jong, I. J. F. 2007. "Narratological theory on time", in De Jong and Nünlist (eds) 2007, 1–14.

de Toro, A. 2011. "Time structure in the contemporary novel", in Meister and Schernus (eds) 2011, 109–42.

Efthymiadis, S. (ed.) 2014. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography, vol. 2: Genres and Contexts*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VT.

Emerson, C. and M. Holquist (eds) 1986. M. M. Bakhtin. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* translated by V. W. McGee. Austin, TX and London.

Genette, G. 1980. *Narrative Discourse: An Essay on Method*. Translated from French by J. E. Lewin. Ithaca, NY.

Heisenberg, A. 1905. "Kaiser Johannes Batatzes der Barmherzige. Eine Mittelgriechische Legende" *BZ* 14, 160–92.

Holquist, M. and C. Emerson (eds and trs) 1981. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Austin, TX and London.

Jeffreys, M. J. and E. J. Jeffreys 1971. "Imberios and Margarona: the manuscripts, sources and edition of a Byzantine verse romance" *Byzantion* 41, 122–60.

Kampianaki, T. 2014. "*Vita Basilii*: The Power of Rhythm in Constructing the Narrative Landscape of Imperial Propaganda", in Lau, Franchi and Di Rodi (eds) 2014, 179–94.

Kriaras, E. (ed) 1955. *Βυζαντινά Ιπποτικά Μυθιστορήματα*. Athens.

Kyrris, K. 1972. "John Cantacuzenos, the Genoese, the Venetians and the Catalans (1348–1354)" *Byzantina* 4, 331–56.

Langdon, J. S. 1978. *John III Ducas Vatatzes' Byzantine Imperium in Anatolian Exile, 1222–54. The Legacy of his Diplomatic, Military and Internal Program for the* Restitutio orbis. Los Angeles.

Lau, M., C. Franchi, and M. Di Rodi (eds) 2014. *Landscapes of Power. Selected Papers from the XV Oxford University Byzantine Society International Graduate Conference*. Bern.

Macrides, R. 2007. *George Akropolites: The History. Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Oxford.

Mango, C. and O. Pritsak (eds) 1983. *Okeanos. Essays presented to Ihor Ševčenko on his Sixtieth Birthday by his Colleagues and Students*. Cambridge, MA.

Meister, J. C. and W. Schernus (eds) 2011. *Time. From Concept to Narrative Construct: A Reader*. Berlin.

Messis, Ch. 2006. *La construction sociale, les 'réalités' et les représentations de l'identité masculine à Byzance*. Unpublished diss. EHESS, Paris.

——— 2014. "Fiction and/or novelisation in Byzantine hagiography", in Efthymiadis (ed.) 2014, 313–42.

——— forthcoming. "Palaiologan hagiographies: saints without romance", in A. Goldwyn and I. Nilsson (eds), *Reading the Late Byzantine Romance: A Handbook*. Cambridge.

Mitsiou, E. 2011. "The monastery of Sosandra: a contribution to its history, dedication and localisation" *Bulgaria Mediaevalis* 2, 665–83.

Mullett, M. 2006. "Novelisation in Byzantium: narrative after the revival of fiction", in Burke, et al. (eds) 2006, 1–28.

Nicol, D. M. 1993. *The Last Centuries of Byzantium, 1261–1453*. Cambridge.

Nicol, D. M. 1996. *The Reluctant Emperor: A Biography of John Cantacuzene, Byzantine Emperor and Monk, c. 1295–1383*. Cambridge.

Nilsson, I. and A. Goldwyn (eds) forthcoming. *A Handbook on the Late Byzantine Romance*. Cambridge.

Oikonomides, N. 1967. "Cinq actes inédits du patriarche Michel Autôreianos" *REB* 25, 113–45.

Papadopoulos, G. I. 1890. *Συμβολαὶ εἰς τὴν ἱστορίαν τῆς παρ' ἡμῖν ἐκκλησιαστικῆς μουσικῆς*. Athens.

Papayianni, A. 2004. "Emperor John III Doukas Vatatzes: an orthodox saint" *Βυζαντινός Δόμος* 14, 27–31.

Polemis, D. 1983. "Remains of an acoluthia for the emperor John Ducas Batatzes", in Mango and Pritsak (eds) 1983, 542–47.

Prato, G. 1981. "Un autografo di Teodoro II Lascaris imperatore di Nicea?" *JÖB* 30, 249–58.

Rizzo Nervo, F. 2000. *Il Vecchio Cavaliere. Introduzione, testo, traduzione.* Soveria Mannelli.
Signes Codoñer, J. 2014. *The Emperor Theophilos and the East, 829–842. Court and Frontier in Byzantium during the Last Phase of Iconoclasm*. BBOS 13, Farnham, Surrey.
Vatidou, O. 1956. *Ἡ χριστιανικότητα τῶν Τούρκων καὶ οἱ Ἕλληνες τῆς Μικρασίας*. Athens.

10

STRUCTURE ET TENSION NARRATIVE DANS LES CYCLES PARIÉTAUX DE LA PASSION DU CHRIST À L'ÉPOQUE TARDOBYZANTINE : LE RÔLE DES APÔTRES

Judith Soria

Le récit évangélique se noue et se dénoue dans les épisodes de la Passion. Alors que les chapitres des Évangiles qui précèdent sont constitués d'unités de récit et d'enseignements, les trois derniers chapitres des synoptiques et le dernier tiers de l'Évangile de Jean relatent des faits constituant assurément une chaîne narrative unique, chacun des faits n'étant intelligible qu'à sa place, dans le droit fil de la narration. L'enchaînement, l'ordre et bien souvent le contenu même des discours du Christ, des guérisons et autres miracles, des micro-récits paraboliques enchâssés etc., varient dans les quatre Évangiles canoniques. Au contraire, les chapitres consacrés à la Passion ont partout la même structure. Il est d'ailleurs notable que l'Évangile de Jean se conforme à ce schéma général et distingue une première partie consacrée au ministère de Jésus et la Passion, qui marque alors une rupture dans le déroulé du récit[1]. Cette structure laisse deviner une tradition orale pré-canonique dans laquelle la trame narrative de la Passion était déjà bien établie[2]. C'est cette trame qui apparaît également dans les cycles narratifs de la Passion peints dans les nefs d'églises tardobyzantines de Macédoine et de Serbie. La multiplication des images et des scènes formant des cycles narratifs est en effet caractéristique de l'évolution des décors pariétaux de la dernière période de l'art byzantin[3]. Dans certaines de ces églises, les épisodes de la Passion se succèdent sur un même registre embrassant la nef. C'est notamment le cas des décors du Prôtaton au Mont Athos[4], de la Péribleptos d'Ohrid[5] et de l'église Saint-Georges à

[1] Dodd 1987, 37–39 ; Vermès 2006.

[2] Dodd 1987, 38.

[3] Voir notamment Millet 1916 ; Demus 1947, 62 : Dufrenne 1967 ; Todić 1993 ; Todić 1999 ; Kirchhainer 2001, 74–77 ; Zarras 2010.

[4] Sur les peintures du Prôtaton voir Xyngopoulos 1956 ; Todić 1987, 2131 ; Kalomoirakis 1989, 197220 ; Kalomoirakis 1990, 73104 ; Đurić 1991, 3789 ; Tsigaridas 2003.

[5] Sur les peintures de la Péribleptos d'Ohrid, voir Millet et Frolow, 1962 ; Marcato 1996 ; Subotić 2001 ; Marković 2011.

Staro Nagoričino[6], sur lesquels porte cette étude. Ces cycles, bien que tous différents, ont une structure et une iconographique assez semblables pour être considérés comme un corpus unifié[7].

Le Prôtaton est construit selon un plan basilical à trois nefs dont l'intérieur est aménagé en croix grecque. Le décor date des années 1290. Le cycle de la Passion comprend treize épisodes, dont le premier – la Cène – et le dernier – le doute de Thomas – sont peints sur les parois respectivement sud et nord du sanctuaire. La suite se développe dans les bras sud et nord du naos, sous les images principales du cycle christologique peint dans les parties hautes des murs. Cet emplacement fera fortune et sera adapté aux architectures de nombreux monuments ultérieurs[8]. La Péribleptos d'Ohrid offre un exemple précoce de cette adaptation dans une église en croix inscrite. Les peintures sont datées de 1295 grâce à l'inscription dédicatoire qui a également transmis l'identité du fondateur, Progon Sgouros. Malgré un plan différent, l'agencement du décor se rapproche de celui du Prôtaton, notamment en raison du cycle de la Passion, qui ici aussi commence sur le mur sud du sanctuaire, occupe le registre médian dans les bras de la croix et comporte, de la Cène au doute de Thomas, quatorze épisodes. On voit dans la partie gauche de la photographie l'image de la Cène au dessus de la barrière du sanctuaire (fig. 1). Le cycle se poursuit dans les bras sud, puis tout autour de la nef, au même niveau que la Cène. L'église Saint-Georges à Staro Nagoričino est à l'origine une fondation de Romain Diogène (1067–1071), rénovée par le Kralj Milutin en 1313[9]. L'intérieur a été aménagé en croix. Le décor alors réalisé présente cinq registres d'images et au niveau intermédiaire, le cycle de la Passion, de la Cène à la mise au tombeau, fait comme dans les exemples précédents le tour du naos à partir du sanctuaire. Très développé, ce dernier comprend vingt et un épisodes. Le nombre d'épisodes est donc très variable d'un monument à l'autre. Or la taille du bâtiment ne détermine pas le développement du cycle de la Passion. Ainsi celui du Prôtaton compte treize épisodes alors que les proportions de l'édifice, très importantes, sont incomparables à celles de la Péribleptos, plus modeste et qui en compte quatorze. L'évolution chronologique du cycle en terme de nombre d'épisodes n'est pas non plus évidente si l'on considère l'en-

[6] Sur les peintures de l'église Saint-Georges à Staro Nagoričino voir Millet et Frolow 1962 ; Todić 1993 ; Todić 1999, 32025.

[7] Ces conclusions, issues de ma thèse de doctorat reposent sur un corpus d'une vingtaine d'églises, dont seules trois sont présentées ici pour la clarté du propos. Voir Soria 2015.

[8] Ici encore voir Soria 2015.

[9] Cette fondation, que l'inscription attribue au mécénat du Karlj, servit à glorifier une victoire de l'empire byzantin contre les Turcs en Asie mineure. Milutin avait envoyé des renforts en soutien à son beau-père Andronic II et avait ainsi contribué au succès de cette bataille, qui est en effet mentionnée dans l'inscription. Todić, 1993, 2627, ajoute que la dédicace à Saint-Georges, saint militaire, pourrait être en rapport avec ce rôle de célébration d'une victoire.

semble des églises dont le décor comprend un tel cycle. En revanche, au cours du XIVe siècle, l'expansion du nombre d'épisodes peut être mise en relation avec le prestige de la fondation[10].

Ces cycles de la Passion sont donc très clairement disposés en dessous des voûtes où apparaissent les images du cycle des Fêtes. Peints en continu sur un registre unique à mi-hauteur, ils sont perceptibles dans leur ensemble de partout dans la nef. Cet agencement particulier confère à ces images une dynamique narrative, renforcée à certains égards par l'important corpus épigraphique conservé au seins des images et composé de citations évangéliques plus ou moins exactes. Ces inscriptions mettent visuellement en évidence les dialogues et, activant les images, donnent évidemment une dimension théâtrale aux cycles narratifs. Afin de soumettre l'approche méthodologique à la forme narrative du matériel, les cycles seront abordés d'abord au niveau de leur structure. Le tout étant plus éloquent que la somme des images, nous l'envisagerons ici de façon globale et non épisode par épisode comme la méthode iconographique le demande traditionnellement. La narrativité de ces images de la Passion prend en effet toute son ampleur dans son développement séquentiel à l'échelle du cycle composé de nombreux épisodes. La définition de la narration comme « représentation séquentielle d'événements séquentiels[11] » correspond très bien à ce type de disposition. La séquentialité du medium, ici des peintures murales, redouble la séquentialité de l'histoire (la chose elle-même)[12]. Cette dichotomie entre l'événement et son récit est probablement inhérente à la narratologie[13] et trouve son pendant dans la divergence entre la séquence narrative, qui concerne l'action, et l'intrigue, qui elle est une propriété du discours[14]. L'analyse des cycles narratifs portera sur la mise en intrigue des différentes actions de la Passion montrées dans les peintures et sera surtout attentive au rôle tenu par les apôtres.

STRUCTURE DE L'ACTION

La séquentialité adoptée dans ces décors permet d'abord de mettre en avant le déroulé actantiel de la Passion du Christ et de le manifester visuellement dans l'espace de la nef. L'action et le changement d'état ou la transformation qui en résulte sont les critères essentiels de la narratologie classique pour définir la narration :

[10] Soria 2015, 99–101.

[11] Il s'agit de la définition du récit retenue par Kafalenos 2006, VIII.

[12] Sur la séquentialité des images narratives, voir par exemple Wolf 2005, 433–34.

[13] Voir les réflexions de Fludernik 2010, 106–111 au sujet de cette dichotomie.

[14] Baroni 2007, 61.

> Un récit idéal commence par une situation stable qu'une force quelconque vient perturber. Il en résulte un état de déséquilibre ; par l'action d'une forme dirigée en inverse, l'équilibre est rétabli ; le second équilibre est bien semblable au premier, mais les deux ne sont jamais identiques. Il y a par conséquent deux types d'épisodes dans un récit ; ceux qui décrivent un état (d'équilibre ou de déséquilibre) et ceux qui décrivent le passage d'un état à l'autre[15].

L'action représentée dans ces cycles peints peut être découpée en cinq séquences[16]. Le récit débute alors que le Christ et ses apôtres, arrivés à Jérusalem, célèbrent la Pâque. La situation initiale est exposée dans les images de la Cène, du Lavement des pieds et, lorsque l'épisode est représenté, de l'Enseignement du Christ qui suit le Lavement. Les images montrent Jésus et ses disciples réunis autour de la table dans le dernier repas (fig. 2 et 3), puis le Christ face à Pierre à qui il a entrepris de laver les pieds, les autres apôtres étant derrière eux, et enfin, au Prôtaton et à Staro Nagoričino, le Christ en train de discourir face à leur groupe dans l'image de l'enseignement (fig. 4 et 5). Cette séquence présente la situation au début du récit : les apôtres sont réunis autour du Christ, forment un cercle autour de lui, mais l'un d'eux fomente contre lui. L'élément déclencheur du récit, ou le nœud[17] est donc déjà présent dans ces premières images, à travers l'annonce de la trahison de Judas, montrée dans la Cène par le bras tendu du traitre. Le contenu actantiel en est donc l'annonce de la trahison d'une part et l'institution des rites (eucharistie et lavement des pieds) d'une autre. Dans un deuxième temps, marqué visuellement par le changement de décor, le Christ a emmené ses compagnons à Gethsémani (fig. 6). Il s'en éloigne pour prier avant son arrestation, qui survient dans l'image qui suit[18]. Deux péripéties sont en outre représentées dans l'image de l'arrestation : Pierre coupant l'oreille du serviteur du grand prêtre, en bas à droite des images, et la fuite des apôtres dans sa partie supérieure, qui reprend ironiquement la disposition circulaire des apôtres attentifs dans la Cène (fig. 7 et 8). Cette séquence voit donc la situation basculer : le Christ était libre et représenté entouré de ses apôtres, il est maintenant prisonnier et abandonné des siens. Trois éléments composent le troisième séquence : aux interrogatoires des prêtres et au Jugement de Pilate s'ajoutent les Reniements de Pierre et la Dérision du Christ qui clôt généralement la séquence. Le fil de l'action principale qui mène de l'arrestation à la condamnation et à l'exécution du supplice, passe par les interrogatoires et le jugement de Pilate, ce qui rend la représentation de ces épisodes indispensable au récit. Les reniements de Pierre, sans avoir le même rôle

[15] Todorov, 1968, 82.
[16] Dodd, 1987, 47-48 ; Kermode 1979, 83.
[17] Voir le schéma quinaire, énoncé par Larivaille, 1974, 368–88.
[18] Dans le cycle de l'église Saint-Georges à Staro Nagoričino, une image mettant en scène Judas et les Prêtres est intercalée entre les deux épisodes se déroulant à Gethsémani. Dans la mesure où cet épisode, complété de quelques autres constituent un fil narratif secondaire, nous n'en traiterons pas ici.

dans cette chaîne causale, sont pourtant représentés à la Péribleptos d'Ohrid et à Staro Nagoričino (fig. 9 et fig. 10). Cet épisode doit être placé dans la poursuite du thème de la fuite des apôtres et du démantèlement du groupe. Dans la quatrième séquence, la sentence est mise à exécution, et le Christ monte au calvaire et est crucifié (fig. 11). Il est donc maintenant mort et mis au tombeau. Ce dénouement est évidemment provisoire : à l'arrestation, la condamnation et la mise à mort (actions transformatrices), succède la résurrection : au Prôtaton et à la Péribleptos d'Ohrid, le récit se poursuit dans une cinquième séquence dans laquelle le Christ ressuscité apparaît à ses disciples (fig. 12). L'équilibre est alors retrouvé, bien que dans une nouvelle configuration, dans la réunion du Christ et des apôtres après son retour d'entre les morts. Le cycle étant disposé tout autour de la nef, les derniers épisodes se trouvent en face des premiers sur les murs nord et sud du sanctuaire : cette configuration met en évidence la similarité des situations initiale et finale.

Les séquences s'enchaînent donc en suivant la structure des textes évangéliques, et l'originalité même et l'intérêt de ces images tient à cette littéralité. Cela ne signifie pourtant pas que les images sont une formulation subordonnée à leur source ; du moins pas nécessairement à leur source écrite. En effet, Jean aussi, dont on sait qu'il est indépendant des synoptiques, présente le récit de la Passion sous une forme très proche de celle des trois autres évangiles. C'est évidemment que l'histoire elle-même a cette forme et que c'est à cette histoire que les peintres, comme les évangélistes avant eux, se sont référés. Et cette histoire, ce mythe ou ce récit, comme on voudra le désigner, est appelée à travers une série de manifestations qui entretiennent entre elles des liens intertextuels évidents : évangiles, poésie liturgique, cycles narratifs, etc.

Le cadre narratif de ces images a souvent été appréhendé à travers les lectures évangéliques des célébrations pascales, et cette adéquation est presque systématiquement mentionnée par les auteurs[19]. Les événements compris entre la soirée de l'arrestation et ceux qui suivent la mort du Christ, et qui correspondent donc à la structure des cycles de la Passion, sont célébrés entre le Jeudi saint et le dimanche de Pâques. Cela ne peut suffire cependant à expliquer le choix d'en faire le cœur de ce récit peint. Liturgiquement, le cycle pascal n'est pas limité à ces jours-ci, bien qu'ils en soient certainement les plus solennels. La Grande Semaine va du dimanche des Rameaux jusqu'au Vendredi saint, avant le jour de Pâques proprement dit qui est le dimanche, et les festivités se prolongent au cours de l'Octave pascal. L'aspect proprement liturgique n'est certainement pas à négliger : ainsi le récit en lui-même, évoquant l'Eucharistie et commémorant le sacrifice du Christ, est réactualisé par le rite au cours de la Divine Liturgie à laquelle ces

[19] Millet 1916 ; voir aussi Dufrenne 1967, 35-67 et Todić 1999, 130-37. Les ouvrages consacrés aux églises du corpus mentionnent souvent cette concordance.

images font référence. Il est cependant évident que des critères compositionnels et narratifs ont été retenus dans la construction du récit de la Passion tel qu'il se déploie sur les murs de ces églises. Loin d'être anodins, les deux premiers épisodes, la Cène et le lavement des pieds, contiennent en effet un certain nombre d'éléments qui caractérisent le début des histoires, notamment le contrat entre les personnages, et dans sa version biblique, l'alliance (institution des rites), mais aussi plus simplement, une situation initiale, stable, mais contenant en germe l'élément perturbateur qui va mettre le récit en branle (ici le geste de Juda)[20]. Le fait que le cycle en question s'ouvre sur l'institution de l'eucharistie, que les Évangiles synoptiques (Marc, Mathieu et Luc) datent du soir de la célébration de Pâque, est significatif. Jean évoque l'eucharistie à un autre moment du récit[21], et dans cette séquence narrative, c'est le Lavement des pieds qui endosse cette fonction. Dans le texte de Jean, le Christ fait en effet explicitement un lien entre son acte et le fait d'avoir « part avec lui[22] ». Ces deux gestes du Christ (partage du pain et lavement des pieds) font donc figure de nouvelle Alliance (qui constitue une mise à jour de la première Alliance entre Dieu et le peuple élu) et établissent un nouveau contrat entre les personnages : le Christ demande expressément à ses disciples d'effectuer à l'avenir ce geste en souvenir de lui[23]. C'est à partir de ce contrat, on pourrait dire également de cet engagement demandé aux apôtres, que doivent être lus les événements à venir, notamment la rupture dudit contrat caractérisée par la trahison de Juda et la dispersion des apôtres. Le récit prend ainsi pour bornes la promesse de l'Alliance d'une part et son accomplissement de l'autre. Il se développe entre l'annonciation[24] de l'événement et l'événement annoncé, puisque le récit peint se clôt soit sur la mise au tombeau qui entérine la mort du Christ (Saint-Georges à Staro Nagoričino), soit (au Prôtaton et à la Péribleptos) sur la réunion du Christ et des apôtres, qui marque l'accomplissement de Marc 26: 32 : « Mais, après que je serai ressuscité, je vous précèderai en Galilée. ». Cela permet que le récit se présente complet et clos sur lui-même.

Le récit assumé par les cycles a été brièvement présenté au moyen de séquences fondées sur l'action montrée dans les images afin que soit mise en évidence sa structure. Il faut maintenant remarquer l'écart entre d'une part l'avancée de l'action, et de l'autre l'intelligence qu'en ont les personnages. Ainsi, lorsque le Christ lave les pieds des apôtres, il n'attend pas de ces derniers qu'ils saisissent le sens de ce geste, il leur dit

[20] Voir l'article « Contrat » dans Greimas et Courtés 1979.

[21] Jean introduit l'eucharistie en Jean 6: 50–58.

[22] Jean 13: 8.

[23] Luc 22: 19; 1 Cor 11: 25.

[24] Gibert 1986, ch. XVII définit un type canonique des annonciations bibliques, qui mettent en scène un personnage humain et un messager divin. Si à priori l'annonce de sa Passion par le Christ ne répond pas tout à fait à ce schéma, cela est dû à l'ambivalence du Christ : personnage humain et divin, victime et acteur du sacrifice qui se joue.

au contraire qu'ils ne le comprendront que plus tard ; la représentation du moment où le Christ enseigne aux apôtres le sens du lavement des pieds permet de figurer cet écart entre l'action et le dévoilement de son sens. Il y a donc un secret qui demande à être révélé, autrement dit un décalage entre la trame actantielle de la Passion et la révélation, en différé, de sa signification. La double temporalité, de l'action d'une part et de la révélation de sa finalité de l'autre, doit être mis en évidence. Cette distinction se rapproche de celle opérée par Roland Barthes entre ce qu'il appelle le code proaïrétique, qui concerne le déroulement de l'action, et le code herméneutique, qui organise le récit en alternance d'énigmes et de dévoilements[25]. C'est dans ce décalage notamment que nous semble demeurer la tension des récits de la Passion qui nous occupent. La seule structure de l'action n'épuise pas la portée du récit. Au contraire, pour Raphaël Baroni, ce qui fait l'intrigue, c'est un effet du discours[26] autrement dit la tension narrative qu'il définit comme « le phénomène qui survient lorsque l'interprète [le lecteur, auditeur ou spectateur] d'un récit est encouragé à attendre un dénouement, cette attente étant caractérisée par une anticipation teintée d'incertitude qui confère des traits passionnels à l'acte de réception[27]. » Cette dichotomie à l'origine de la tension narrative est en effet féconde.

CE QUE SAVAIENT LES APÔTRES

Pour rappeler le lien étroit entre contemplation des images et pratique eucharistique, Nicole Bériou évoque l'apprentissage nécessaire devant le mystère du Christ : « Quant à l'institution de l'eucharistie, elle a lieu au moment où Jésus, s'apprêtant à subir la mort sur la croix qui est le prélude à la transformation de son corps glorieux et à son Ascension à la droite du Père, constitue le sacrement comme un don fait aux hommes, don de sa présence dans l'absence de l'être de chair qu'ils avaient eu l'habitude de côtoyer, pain et vin *où ils devront apprendre à voir*, sous l'apparence du visible, la vérité de l'invisible[28]. » Ce faisant, c'est d'abord aux apôtres, qui l'ont connu de son vivant et sont les premiers témoins de ces mystères, qu'elle assigne la tâche « d'apprendre à voir ». Or, les apôtres revêtent une importance capitale dans ces récits peints de la Passion. On a vu que l'un des nœuds du récit tenait à leur présence autour de leur maître, à leur engagement dans la Nouvelle Alliance, à leur fuite malgré cela et finalement à leur retour. En outre, ces personnages restent tout au long du développement de l'intrigue les spectateurs naïfs de ce qui est en train de se passer sous leurs yeux, et par

[25] Barthes 1970.
[26] Baroni 2007, 43.
[27] Baroni 2007, 18.
[28] Bériou 2009, 41. C'est nous qui soulignons.

l'intermédiaire des peintures, sous les yeux des fidèles qui se tiennent dans la nef. Dans les images, un certain nombre d'éléments concourent à l'établissement de l'ignorance de ces personnages, celle-ci permettant de mettre en œuvre la révélation qui va suivre.

De la Cène jusqu'aux épisodes de jugements en effet, le comportement des apôtres est systématiquement inapproprié et leur mécompréhension des enjeux du drame est criante. La Cène montre en même temps l'annonce de la trahison et l'institution de l'eucharistie. Dans un moment si solennel on pourrait imaginer les apôtres recueillis et sensibles à la gravité de l'événement, mais il n'en est rien. Les images montrent des apôtres troublés et agités, occupés à s'interroger deux à deux au sujet de ce qu'ils ne comprennent pas. Leurs mains levées au niveau de leurs bustes témoignent de leur étonnement, par exemple à Staro Nagoričino (fig. 3). Dans le lavement des pieds, le geste caractéristique de Pierre va également dans ce sens (fig. 3 et 4). Celui-ci désigne sa tête : « Seigneur, non seulement les pieds, mais aussi les mains et la tête[29] ! », trahissant malgré son enthousiasme la mécompréhension qu'il a du projet du Christ. Le fait que cet épisode du lavement des pieds soit, au Prôtaton et à Staro Nagoričino, associé à l'enseignement, avec lequel il forme un diptyque, est particulièrement révélateur de ce fonctionnement en deux temps du récit : dans l'évangile de Jean, la naïveté de Pierre transparaît évidemment de sa réaction face au Christ qui s'apprête à le laver. Or, là encore, le maître diffère d'abord le moment d'expliquer son geste resté incompris de l'apôtre : « Ce que je fais, tu ne le sais pas à présent ; par la suite tu comprendras[30] ». Notons que cet épisode est la première occasion d'individualiser Pierre. C'est en effet entre ce dernier et le Christ que se joue surtout l'action. C'est bien sûr le Christ qui agit ; c'est pourtant Pierre, par sa résistance à l'initiative du Christ, qui crée le conflit au cœur de l'épisode, conflit certes d'une autre nature et d'une autre portée que celui apporté par Judas dans la Cène. C'est aussi la réaction de Pierre qui justifie d'une certaine façon le discours que le Christ tient aux apôtres après le lavement des pieds, et dont la représentation suit. Au Prôtaton par exemple, le couple formé par Pierre et le Christ est particulièrement mis en valeur par l'espace laissé vacant entre les deux personnages, par le contact visuel et physique surtout qui distingue Pierre du groupe compact des onze apôtres occupés à se déchausser (fig. 4).

À Gethsémani encore, la position des apôtres avachis et endormis diffère de l'attention que les mêmes personnages montraient antérieurement, en particulier dans l'image de l'enseignement à l'issue du lavement des pieds. Cela exprime sinon l'indifférence des apôtres, du moins leur naïveté à l'égard du drame en train de se jouer. Le terme ῥαθυμία (paresse, indolence), inscrit à leur côté, souligne ce décalage, par exemple à la

[29] Jean 13: 9 : Κύριε, μὴ τοὺς πόδας μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς χεῖρας καὶ τὴν κεφαλήν.

[30] Jean 13: 7 : Ὃ ἐγὼ ποιῶ, σὺ οὐκ οἶδας ἄρτι, γνώσῃ δὲ μετὰ ταῦτα.

Péribleptos d'Ohrid (fig. 6). D'ailleurs, le Christ lui-même constate que les apôtres ne sont pas à la hauteur de la situation. Ainsi, toujours à la Péribleptos, la phrase prononcée et inscrite (Matth 26: 40) doit certainement être comprise comme un reproche : Οὕτως οὐκ ἰσχύσατε μίαν ὥραν γρηγορῆσαι μετ' ἐμοῦ; « Ainsi vous n'avez pas pu veiller une heure avec moi ». L'arrestation vient confirmer l'annonce que Jésus avait justement faite à ses disciples afin qu'ils croient : « Dès à présent je vous le dis, avant que la chose arrive, afin que, lorsqu'elle arrivera, vous croyiez à ce que je suis.[31] ». On ne peut pourtant que constater encore une fois leur défaillance. On a déjà mentionné la dislocation du groupe des apôtres et le geste inapproprié de Pierre, qui tranche l'oreille du serviteur. L'épisode nourrit le thème du consentement du Christ à son sacrifice, déjà présent dans l'image de prière qui précède[32]. Jean donne à cette péripétie sa forme la plus aboutie et y transfert la fonction de la prière à Gethsémani, qu'il ne relate pas dans son Évangile : « Jésus dit à Pierre: 'Remets ton épée dans le fourreau. Ne boirai-je pas la coupe que le Père m'a donnée à boire?' [33]». Il introduit aussi l'ambiguïté inhérente au récit de la Passion concernant l'action qui se déroule. L'arrestation est en effet subie par le Christ ; elle n'en est pas moins nécessaire à la quête même du protagoniste, son sacrifice étant inscrit dans l'économie du Salut. La difficulté à analyser l'action qui se joue au cours du drame et le rôle de chacun des actants tient au paradoxe qui en est la colonne vertébrale. Les personnages eux-mêmes ignorent le rôle qu'ils tiennent précisément : ainsi Pierre, voulant secourir le Christ (adjuvant dans la terminologie de Greimas[34]), se trouve en fait en position d'opposant. Il est à noter que ce décalage est caractéristique de la construction du personnage de Pierre, si important dans ces cycles peints. Ce dernier a en effet constamment des réactions inappropriées ; on l'a déjà vu dans le Lavement des pieds, on peut également citer, en amont du récit de la Passion, l'épisode de la Transfiguration sur le Mont Thabor, qui est un bon exemple de la naïveté de l'apôtre. Il espère en effet éviter des souffrances au Christ en demeurant dans la contemplation de la Divinité, et propose de dresser des tentes au lieu de poursuivre la route vers Jérusalem et le sacrifice rédempteur qu'il ne comprend pas encore[35]. Ici c'est en coupant l'oreille du serviteur du Grand prêtre qu'il se distingue. Cette péripétie s'inscrit donc dans cette dynamique du dévoilement, qui nécessite d'exposer l'obscurité dans laquelle Pierre se trouve d'abord. Le thème du sacrifice volontaire du Christ, récurrent tout au

[31] Jean 13:19 : Ἀπ' ἄρτι λέγω ὑμῖν πρὸ τοῦ γενέσθαι, ἵνα, ὅταν γένηται, πιστεύσητε ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι.

[32] Luc 22: 51.

[33] Jean 18: 11 : Εἶπεν οὖν ὁ Ἰησοῦς τῷ Πέτρῳ, Βάλε τὴν μάχαιράν σου εἰς τὴν θήκην: τὸ ποτήριον ὃ δέδωκέν μοι ὁ πατήρ, οὐ μὴ πίω αὐτό;

[34] Greimas 1966 et Greimas et Courtés 1979, 242-47 et 297-98.

[35] Matth. 17: 1–9 ; Marc 9:2–9 ; Luc 9: 28–36. Luc précise après la proposition de Pierre de monter des tentes pour le Christ, Moïse et Élie : μὴ εἰδὼς ὃ λέγει. (Il ne savait ce qu'il disait), Luc 9: 33.



Fig. 1 : Église de la Péribleptos, Ohrid. Vue d’ensemble du sud de la nef

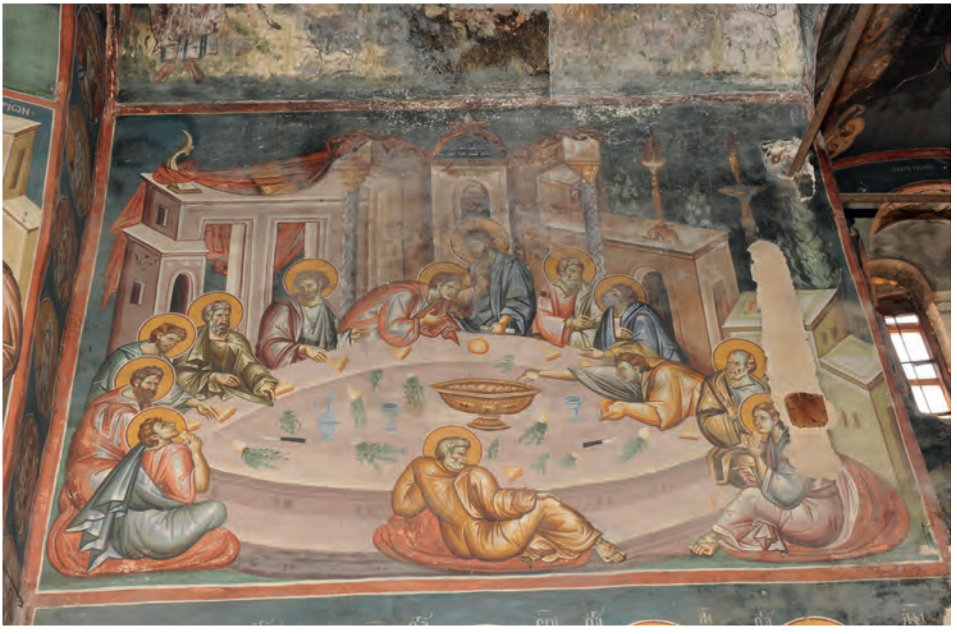


Fig. 2 : Église de la Péribleptos, Ohrid. La Cène



Fig. 3 : Église Saint-Georges, Staro Nagoričino. La Cène et le lavement des pieds



Fig. 4 : Église du Prôtaton, Mont Athos. Le lavement des pieds et l'enseignement du Christ.



Fig. 5 : Église Saint-Georges, Staro Nagoričino. L'enseignement du Christ.



Fig. 6 : Église de la Péribleptos, Ohrid. La dernière prière à Gethsémani



Fig. 7 : Église de la Péribleptos, Ohrid. L'arrestation du Christ



Fig. 8 : Église Saint-Georges, Staro Nagoričino. L'arrestation du Christ



Fig. 9 : Église de la Péribleptos, Ohrid. La comparution devant Caïphe et le reniement de Pierre



Fig. 10 : Église Saint-Georges, Staro Nagoričino. Les remords de Pierre et le jugement d'Hérode



Fig. 11 : Église Saint-Georges, Staro Nagoričino. La crucifixion



Fig. 12 : Église de la Péribleptos, Ohrid. Le doute de Thomas et l'apparition aux Onze

long du récit, rappelle que la Passion répond à une économie générale, à un plan divin du Salut. Cela n'empêche pourtant la résistance d'un certain nombre de personnages, qui s'opposent de façon plus ou moins consciente à la réalisation de ce plan. Or ce sont ces résistances, notamment celles des apôtres, Pierre en tête, qui paraissent à même de mener et relancer le récit. Cela est vrai dans les textes même des évangiles[36], et transparaît dans le récit tel qu'il a été mis en images dans le décor de ces églises.

Ce premier mouvement prend sans doute fin avec les remords de Pierre, après qu'il a renié le Christ et prétendu ne pas le connaître. À nouveau cet épisode vient confirmer une annonce du Christ[37], que la présence du coq dans l'image évoque sans ambigüité (fig. 9 et 10). Cependant les remords et les larmes de Pierre sont le signe que cette fois l'obscurité se dissipe. On sait que les larmes de contrition, ne pouvant être versées que par la grâce de Dieu, étaient pour les Byzantins le signe de son acceptation des remords du pénitent[38]. D'ailleurs, à partir de là, les apôtres, mis à part Jean qui se tient aux côté de la Vierge au pied de la croix et lors des lamentations, disparaissent jusqu'aux dernières images.

Ce n'est que dans les épisodes d'après la résurrection, lorsque le cycle se poursuit jusque-là, que les apôtres sont réintroduits. Ils sont au complet lors de l'apparition en Galilée et lors du doute de Thomas au Prôtaton et à la Péribleptos d'Ohrid (fig. 12). Leur présence très fréquente dans les décors à la fin du récit de la Passion est liée à la cohérence d'ensemble du récit[39]. Un des thèmes qui apparaît nettement dans les peintures est la dislocation du groupe formé par les apôtres. Ceci ressort des images des premières séquences. Bien qu'elle soit déjà mise en danger par Judas, l'harmonie du groupe autour de la table du dernier repas est évidente. À cela succède le désordre des apôtres endormis dans le jardin des oliviers, puis leur fuite lors de l'arrestation. Les dernières images montrent au contraire le groupe reconstitué à la fin du récit. Or, une fois les écailles tombées des yeux de Thomas, ce sont tous les apôtres (à l'exception bien sûr de Judas) qui sont à nouveau réunis autour du Christ. L'épisode dont Thomas est le protagoniste est décisif. Il montre en effet un apôtre qui a douté, mais qui comme la brebis égarée, a rejoint le collège des apôtres. Cette unité des apôtres est largement soulignée par la composition de ces cycles de la Passion, et la force visuelle du récit tient notamment à cet agencement des images dans l'espace.

36 Voir surtout Kermode 1979 et Ricœur 1985.

37 « Jésus lui dit: Je te le dis en vérité, cette nuit même, avant que le coq chante, tu me renieras trois fois. » Matth 26: 34 ; Marc 14: 30 ; Luc 22: 34 ; Jean 13: 38.

38 Hinterberger 2006, 36-37. Voir aussi Hunt 2004 et Hinterberger 2010, 130.

39 Le choix de ces épisodes ne se justifie pas par les péricopes lues au cours de la liturgie. Soria 2015, 249.

Les apôtres ne saisissent pas d'emblée ce qui est en train de se jouer. C'est donc par leur truchement que se met en place une tension herméneutique, pour reprendre le terme barthesien. Leur ignorance permet en effet que soit interrogé le sens général du sacrifice.

TENSION NARRATIVE ET MYSTAGOGIE

Les apôtres sont les spectateurs à la fois privilégiés et naïfs de ces événements de la Passion et le relais des « regardants », des fidèles qui se tiennent dans la nef. Ils ne parviennent pas encore à « croire ce qu'ils ne voient pas », pour reprendre les formules patristiques au sujet du mystère, notion centrale de la révélation chrétienne. Jean Chrysostome, dans la septième homélie sur la première lettre aux Corinthiens, distingue la façon dont un croyant et un incroyant interprètent les différents événements de la vie du Christ :

> Ce n'est pas en effet par la vue que je juge les apparences, mais par les yeux de l'esprit. J'entends parler du Corps du Christ, et je conçois autrement que lui [l'incroyant] ce qui m'est dit[40].

Le mystère (τὸ μυστήριον) est une réalité cachée en Dieu, accomplie dans le Christ et révélée par lui aux hommes[41]. Les définitions patristiques du mystère, fondées largement sur les écrits pauliniens, n'ont pas été fondamentalement modifiées lorsque sont réalisés les décors du Prôtaton de la Péribleptos d'Ohrid ou de l'église de Staro Nagoricino. On retrouve notamment chez Syméon de Thessalonique au XV[e] siècle une approche qui ne diffère guère de celles de Jean Chrysostome ou Maxime le Confesseur[42]. La notion concerne l'économie de la Rédemption mais aussi les sacrements, qui ont une forme apparente et un sens mystique, comme un récit peut être constitué d'une action immédiatement perceptible, mais dotée d'un sens qui demande à être révélé.

Le lavement des pieds exemplifie parfaitement le concept même de mystère. Ainsi peut-on lire dans l'homélie de Jean Chrysostome citée précédemment, toujours au sujet du fidèle et de l'incroyant : « Il [l'incroyant] entend parler du baptême et ne voit que de l'eau. [...] Lui pense que seul mon corps est lavé, moi je crois que l'âme aussi est devenue pure et sainte [...][43] ». Au moment du lavement des pieds, Pierre est demeuré au stade de l'incroyant. Le Christ donne ensuite un premier sens au lavement des pieds en s'adressant toujours à Pierre. Le lavement des pieds permet un partage entre lui et l'apôtre. « Si je ne te lave pas tu n'auras pas de part avec moi », qui entraine évidemment l'acceptation de l'apôtre et l'enthousiasme déplacé dont il est coutumier, puisque

40 PG 111, 56A, cité dans l'article « Mystère » du *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 1937.

41 Bornert 1966, 75–76 et « Mystère » dans *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 1937.

42 Bornert, 1966, 259–60.

43 PG 61, 55D-56A, cité dans l'article « Mystère » du *Dictionnaire de spiritualité* 1937.

le voilà prêt à se faire laver les mains et la tête aussi. Ceci apparaît très clairement dans les images, dans le geste de Pierre montrant sa tête (fig. 3 et 4). Dans l'évangile de Jean, le récit du lavement en lui-même est en effet suivi d'un enseignement, dans lequel le Christ va donner aux apôtres un second sens à son geste. Cette leçon comporte deux points importants : l'humilité d'abord, le Seigneur et Maître lave les pieds de ses disciples, et une invitation à imiter cette humilité et le geste de lavement qui en est le signe. C'est cependant le rôle qu'y tient Pierre dans le texte et qui est mis en évidence par les images qui nous intéresse ici : Pierre ne comprend pas de quoi il s'agit. Le partage dans les peintures murales de cet épisode en deux images, le lavement à proprement parler puis l'enseignement qui en est tiré, permet de distinguer la forme littérale et narrative du lavement des pieds, d'abord restée obscure pour les apôtres, de la signification que le Christ leur communique, mais aussi de son intelligence liturgique. Le sens mystique du lavement est donc souligné par le dédoublement de l'épisode. Si l'image, qui ne montre que le Christ parlant à ses disciples ne permet pas en elle-même d'explication du lavement des pieds, elle indique que ce geste a une double valeur, qu'il a un sens sous-jacent indiqué par le texte[44], toujours inscrit dans la partie supérieure du cadre (fig. 5). La présence de l'épisode de l'enseignement du Christ à destination des apôtres dans ces cycles s'explique en partie par la volonté de souligner leur manque de perspicacité.

Le mystère réside donc dans l'écart apparent entre d'un côté une manifestation matérielle, comme une action du Christ ou un événement de sa vie et d'un autre la réalité spirituelle qu'elle désigne. Les faits sont appréhendés par les sens et connus par la raison naturelle. La réalité intelligible qu'ils sous-tendent n'est en revanche accessible qu'à la foi et est en dernière instance révélée par l'Esprit saint[45]. Les fidèles eux-mêmes en ont une idée imparfaite. Leur connaissance et compréhension nécessitent une initiation, ou mystagogie. Les apôtres sont donc en bonne place pour cette initiation au mystère central du salut et de l'eucharistie. Les différents épisodes de la Passion dont les apôtres sont à la fois les acteurs et les spectateurs, revêtent alors une fonction mystagogique, qui des apôtres, à qui l'enseignement est d'abord prodigué, est communiquée aux fidèles : ces récits de la Passion sont peints en continu du sanctuaire à la nef d'églises byzantines, c'est-à-dire du lieu où est célébrée la Divine liturgie à celui dans lequel se rassemblent les fidèles pour y assister.

[44] La peinture du Prôtaton est trop endommagée pour que l'inscription puisse être lisible. À Staro Nagoričino, le texte est le suivant : ὁ **χ[ριστὸς] διδάσκων** τοὺς μαθητὰς, αὐτ[οῦ] **λέγων ιδατ**[ε] τί πεπίηκα ἡμῖν; | Ἡ οὖν ἐγὼ, ὁ κ[ύριο]ς κ[αὶ] ὁ διδάσκαλος, ἔνιψα ἡμῶν τοὺς πόδας ὀφίλη | κ[αὶ] ἡμῆς ἀλλήλων νίπτιν | τοὺς πόδας. Le Christ enseignant aux apôtres, leur disant : « Vous avez vu ce que je vous ai fait ? Si moi, le Seigneur et maître, je vous ai lavé les pieds, vous [devez] les uns aux autres, vous laver les pieds. Le texte est adapté de Jean 13: 12–14.

[45] Voir aussi 1 Cor 2:7–16.

Les chapitres de l'évangile de Jean qui sont intercalés entre le lavement des pieds et la suite du récit de la Passion contiennent manifestement les dernières recommandations du Christ à ses disciples. Ils constituent notamment la première péricope de l'office de la Passion (Jean 13:31–18:1), que la tradition a nommée Testament[46]. Outre l'unité des apôtres, ces chapitres insistent sur leur naïveté tout en annonçant que le moment venu, ils sauront ou ils comprendront, comme si ces enseignements, pourtant entendus par les disciples, n'avaient pu encore prendre sens pour eux. À plusieurs reprises l'évangéliste insiste sur le fait que les apôtres ne sont pas prêts à comprendre les mystères de Dieu, soit à travers les paroles du Christ : « J'ai encore beaucoup de choses à vous dire, mais vous ne pouvez pas les porter maintenant[47] », soit par les réactions des apôtres eux-mêmes : « Ils disaient donc : 'Que signifie ce qu'il dit : Encore un peu de temps ? Nous ne savons de quoi il parle.'[48] ». Ces chapitres, mettent en œuvre une dynamique du dévoilement :

> […] la mise en intrigue dépend d'une communication qui manifeste une réticence intentionnelle, qui retarde stratégiquement le dévoilement d'une information essentielle afin d'intriguer un destinataire qui accepte généralement de se prêter au jeu de l'intrigant.[49]

Ces chapitres de Jean soulignent d'abord l'ignorance et l'incompréhension des apôtres pour mieux mettre en évidence le décalage entre la raison et le mystère, ce dernier n'étant accessible que par la foi. Outre les événements et péripéties conduisant au drame de la Passion, les images montrent effectivement cette ignorance des apôtres, partiellement vaincue au long du récit.

On voit à quel point est pertinente la dichotomie entre le code proaïrétique et le code herméneutique de Barthes, reprise par Raphaël Baroni. Ce dernier distingue en effet le « *devenir d'une action* (niveau immanent de l'histoire) » d'un « *discours sur cette action* (niveau apparent de l'intrigue)[50] ». Il convient toutefois de noter que nous en avons modifié légèrement les ressorts afin de la rendre opératoire pour aborder le rôle des apôtres dans les récits de la Passion et leurs manifestations dans les peintures qui nous occupent. D'une part cette tension a été analysée d'abord à partir de la réception de l'action par les personnages, qui s'en font les interprètes intra-diégétiques, et non tant du point de vue des spectateurs et de leur réception des peintures murales. D'autre part, ce n'est pas tant vers le dénouement de l'action que vers le dévoilement de son sens que pointe la tension. Ainsi, l'épisode du lavement des pieds ou le geste maladroit de Pierre, lorsqu'il coupe l'oreille du serviteur, sont autant d'occasions pour

[46] Janeras 2002, 163–71.

[47] Jean 16: 12 : Ἔτι πολλὰ ἔχω λέγειν ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' οὐ δύνασθε βαστάζειν ἄρτι.

[48] Jean 18: 18 : Ἔλεγον οὖν, Τοῦτο τί ἐστιν ὃ λέγει, τὸ μικρόν; Οὐκ οἴδαμεν τί λαλεῖ.

[49] Baroni 2010. Voir aussi sur cette question dans la littérature Ferraris et Vegliante (dir.) 2012.

[50] Baroni 2007, 63.

le Christ de donner une explication ou d'ajouter un nouvel élément permettant aux apôtres de le connaître et de parfaire leur instruction. Ces cycles narratifs donnent une place importante à l'apôtre Pierre qui est mis en scène à plusieurs reprises tout au long du récit. L'apôtre est le protagoniste des épisodes du lavement des pieds, de Gethsémani, du reniement, puis de ses remords. Souvent maladroit, mais capable d'une contrition sincère dont les larmes sont le garant, Pierre apparaît dans ces images comme un personnage relais par lequel le fidèle peut entrer dans le récit, permettant en quelque sorte l'identification du spectateur. Ceci confirme l'importance des apôtres dans l'économie du récit non seulement au niveau de l'action, mais également et surtout au niveau de l'intrigue : leur propre incompréhension conduit à interroger l'action et à en révéler le sens profond.

RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Alber, J., and M. Fludernik. (éd.) 2010. *Postclassical Narratology. Approaches and Analyses*. Columbus, Ohio.

Baroni, R. 2007. *La tension narrative: suspense, curiosité et surprise*. Paris.

——— 2010. « Le temps de l'intrigue » *Cahiers de Narratologie [En ligne]* 18.

Barsanti, C. 1996. *Bisanzio e l'Occidente: arte, archeologia, storia: studi in onore di Fernanda de' Maffei*. Rome.

Barthes, R. 1970. *S/Z*. Paris.

Bériou, N., B. Caseau and D. Rigaux (éd.) 2009. *Pratiques de l'eucharistie dans les Églises d'Orient et d'Occident (Antiquité et Moyen Âge), actes du séminaire tenu à Paris, Institut catholique (1997–2004)*, vol. 1. *L'Institution*. Paris.

Bornert, R. 1966. *Les commentaires byzantins de la divine Liturgie du viie au xve siècle*. Paris.

Burke J. and R. Scott 2001 (éd.). *Byzantine Macedonia: Art, Architecture, Music and Hagiography. Papers from the Melbourne Conference July 1995*. Melbourne.

Demus, O. 1947. *Byzantine Mosaic Decoration: Aspects of Monumental Art in Byzantium*. Londres.

Dodd, C. H. 1987. *La tradition historique du quatrième Évangile*. Paris.

Dufrenne, S. 1967. « L'enrichissement du programme iconographique dans les églises byzantines du xiiie siècle », dans V. J. Đurić 1967, 35-67.

Đurić, V. J. 1967. *L'Art Byzantin du XIIIe siècle*. Belgrade.

——— 1991. « Les conceptions hagioritiques dans la peinture du Protaton » *Recueil de Chilandar* 8, 37-89.

Ferraris D. and J.-Ch. Vegliante (éd.) 2012. *Le Découvrement infini. Dynamiques du dévoilement dans la modernité littéraire*. Paris.

Fludernik, M. 2010. « Mediacy, mediation, and focalization», dans Alber and Fludernik. (éd.) 2010, 106–111.

Gibert, P. 1986. *Bible, mythes et récits de commencement*, Paris.

Greimas, A. J. 1966. *Sémantique structurale : recherche et méthode*. Paris.

Greimas, A. J. et J. Courtés 1979. *Sémiotique. Dictionnaire raisonné de la théorie du langage*. Paris.

Herman, D. et al. (éd.) 2005. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London.

Hinterberger, M. 2006. « Tränen in der Byzantinschen Literatur. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Emotionen » *JÖB* 56, 27-51.

——— 2010. « Emotions in Byzantium » in James (éd.) 2010, 123-34.

Hunt, H. 2004. *Joy-Bearing Grief: Tears of Contrition in the Writing of the Early Syrian and Byzantine Fathers*. The Medieval Mediterranean 57, Leyde and Boston.

James, L. 2010. *A Companion to Byzantium*. Chichester and Malden MA.

Janeras, S. 2002. « “Testament” et “Talent”, deux péricopes évangéliques de la liturgie de Jérusalem », dans A. M. Triacca and A. Pistoia 2002, 163-71.

Kafalenos, E. 2006. *Narrative Causalities*. Columbus, OH.

Kalomoirakis, D. 1989. « Ερμηνευτικές παρατηρήσεις στο εικονογραφικό πρόγραμμα του Πρωτάτου » *Deltion of the Christian Archaeological Society* 15/4, 197-220.

——— 1990. « Πρωτᾶτο. Ἡ ἔρευνα, τὸ μνημεῖο καὶ οἱ πάτρωνές του » *Kleronomia* 22, 73-104.

Kirchhainer, K. 2001. *Die Bildausstattung der Nikolauskirche in Thessaloniki : Untersuchungen zu Struktur und Programm der Malereien*. Weimar.

Kermode, F. 1979. *The Genesis of Secrecy: On the Interpretation of Narrative*. Cambridge.

Larivaille, P. 1974. « L'analyse (morpho)logique du récit » *Poétique* 19, 368-88.

Marcato, E. 1996. « Momenti del rapporto testo-immagine nel ciclo pittorico della chiesa della Vergine Peribleptos di Ocrida », dans Barsanti 1996, 247-56.

Marković, M. 2011. « Iconographic program of the oldest wall paintings in the church of the Virgin Peribleptos at Ohrid: a list of frescoes and notes on certain program particularities » *Zograf* 35, 119–43.

Millet, G. 1916. *Recherches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile aux xive, xve et xvie siècles d'après les monuments de Mistra, de la Macédoine et du Mont-Athos*. Paris.

Millet, G. et A. Frolow 1962. *La peinture du Moyen Age en Yougoslavie*. Paris.

Ricœur, P. 1985. « Le récit interprétatif. Exégèse et Théologie dans les récits de la Passion », *Revue de Science Religieuse* 73/1, 18–38.

Samaržić, R. 1987. *L'art de Thessalonique et des pays balkaniques et les courants spirituels au xvie siècle : recueil des rapports du IVe colloque serbo-grec, Belgrade 1985*. Belgrade.

Soria, J. 2015. *Le récit de la Passion du Christ dans les peintures murales : formes et fonctions du cycle narratif à Byzance et en Serbie du XIIIe au XVe siècle*. Thèse de doctorat, Paris.

Subotić, G. 2001. « Two centers of painting in the fourteenth century », in Burke and Scott 2001, 88–96.

Todić, B. 1987. « Protaton et la peinture serbe des premières décennies du xvie siècle », in Samaržić 1987, 21-31.

——— 1993. *Старо Нагоричино*. Belgrade.

——— 1999. *Serbian Medieval Painting : the Age of King Milutin*. Belgrade.

Todorov, T. 1968. *Qu'est-ce que le structuralisme ? Poétique, tome 2*. Paris.

Triacca, A. M. and A. Pistoia 2002. *La liturgie, interprète de l'Écriture. I Les lectures pour les dimanches et fêtes*. Rome.

Tsigaridas, E. N. 2003. *Μανουήλ Πανσέληνος Εκ του Ιερού Ναού του Πρωτάτου*. Thessalonique.

Vermès, G. 2006. *The Passion: The True Story of an Event That Changed Human History*. Londres.

Wolf, W. 2005. « Narrativity in picture series », in Herman et al. (éd.) 2005, 433–34.

Xyngopoulos A. 1956. *Manuel Panselinos*. Athènes.

Zarras, N. 2010. « The Passion Cycle in Staro Nagoričino » *JÖB* 60, 181-213.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL, POLITICAL AND AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVES

11

UNE LECTURE SUBVERSIVE DE LA VIE DE BASILE EST-ELLE POSSIBLE ? STRATÉGIES NARRATIVES ET OBJECTIFS POLITIQUES À LA COUR DE CONSTANTIN VII PORPHYROGÉNÈTE

Charis Messis

Καθόλου δὲ φοραθεὶς μὲν ὁ κόλαξ οὐ καταγιγνώσκεται μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μισεῖται· δοκεῖ γὰρ καταγελῶν λέγειν. (Dion Chrysostome, *Sur la royauté* 3.23)

La *Vie de Basile* (dorénavant *VB*)[1] est un texte unique dans la production littéraire byzantine, non par son sujet, la biographie d'un empereur, ni même par ses modalités narratives assez conventionnelles, mais bien par sa manière de combiner et d'unifier les différentes traditions littéraires. L'auteur présente son texte comme un récit historique (1: διὰ τοῦ ἀειμνήστου καὶ ἀθανάτου τῆς ἱστορίας στόματος) et l'organise suivant le principe temporel, qui est le marqueur générique de l'historiographie ; il expose en effet sa narration suivant une bipartition assez lâche : une période avant et une période durant le règne de Basile[2]. Outre cette disposition générale, l'écriture s'ordonne suivant la spatialité des *topoi*, qui sont les marqueurs génériques des discours rhétoriques. L'organisation thématique, qui privilégie aussi l'enchaînement épisodique et exemplaire du matériel biographique, se superpose alors à l'organisation chronologique, aboutissant ainsi à un hybride qui déconcerte les chercheurs d'aujourd'hui, toujours indécis sur la catégorisation exacte du texte (biographie historique, discours élogieux, *basilikos logos* et miroir de princes)[3].

[1] Tout renvoi au texte se fait à l'édition de Ševčenko 2011.

[2] Kampianaki 2014, en analysant la perception du temps dans la *VB* en propose une tripartition : a) le temps de la naissance à l'adolescence du héros (ch. 2–15) ; b) la période assez courte qui correspond au moment où il se rend à Constantinople jusqu'à son ascension au trône (ch. 16–18) ; c) la période de son règne (ch. 19–102).

[3] La bibliographie consacrée à l'appartenance générique de la *VB* est assez impressionnante : Alexander 1940 (*basilikos logos*) ; Agapitos 1989 (*speculum principis*) ; Gallina 2000 (vie exemplaire, éloge dynastique et récit historique) ; Markopoulos 2009, 2013, 2014, 2015 (biographie romanesque ou fictionnelle combinant des éléments des 'miroirs des princes') ; van Hoof 2002

Cette indécision sur le genre littéraire ne semble cependant pas avoir posé de problème particulier aux Byzantins, pour qui la nature du message transmis primait sur la manière littéraire dont il se présentait. La *VB* fait partie des ouvrages historiques, au même titre que les biographies des empereurs qui la précèdent dans la *Continuation de Théophane* et que celles qui la suivent dans cette même collection de textes, malgré leurs divergences considérables[4]. L'importance accordée au message privilégie l'usage stratégique des ressources littéraires et conduit à la création de textes dont l'appartenance à un genre littéraire précis a été amplement discutée. Plus précisément, dans le cas des textes biographiques la rhétorique épidictique (éloge et blâme) envahit le paysage de l'écriture et réorganise, en les réduisant, les catégories traditionnelles de l'écriture littéraire.

Nous traiterons la *VB* comme un ensemble cohérent et nous analyserons certaines de ces techniques narratives nonobstant le fait que, si on la lit avec attention, plusieurs incohérences sautent aux yeux et qu'on peut relever, malgré un certain souci d'homogénéisation linguistique et thématique de la part du compositeur, des traces d'un arrangement assez maladroit de morceaux d'origine différente (on trouve par exemple les traces d'une *Geste d'André le Scythe*, dans les 50–51 du texte). Si on compare la *VB* à des textes plus ou moins contemporains, on constate qu'elle innove par rapport aux autres biographies historiques en raison de l'importance donnée à la période qui précède l'ascension de Basile au trône. Tandis que dans les autres biographies historiques, et même hagiographiques, la période de l'enfance et de la jeunesse des futurs empereurs ou saints est presque inexistante, sinon résumée en deux ou trois épisodes représentatifs, elle constitue dans la *VB* plus que du tiers de la narration[5].

En ce qui concerne les avatars littéraires du texte, les savants modernes cherchent plutôt du côté de la littérature classique gréco-romaine : la *Cyropédie* de Xénophon[6], Isocrate ou les *Vies Parallèles* de Plutarque[7], la *Vie de Constantin* écrite par Eusèbe[8], ou encore le manuel rhétorique de Ménandre le Rhéteur, sont les textes que l'on peut sérieusement considérer comme la source d'inspiration ou constituer le *sous-texte* de

(ni *basilikos logos*, ni biographie à la manière de Plutarque, mais biographie encomiastique) ; Varona Codeso 2015 (texte 'non-canonique' (uncanonical) qui combine histoire et hagiographie). Sur ce texte et les conditions de sa création, voir aussi Magdalino 2013

4 Pour un aperçu des problèmes posés par la *Continuation* de Théophane et les différents livres qui la composent, voir en général Karpozilos 2002, 345–66.

5 Sur la jeunesse impériale et le caractère unique du récit concernant Basile Ier, voir Angelov 2009.

6 Markopoulos 2002; Pérez-Martin (2013, 835) reconnaît cependant que la présence d'extraits de la *Cyropédie* dans la *VB* n'est pas importante.

7 Jenkins 1948 et 1954; Gallina 2010.

8 Markopoulos 2014 parle, à propos de la *Vie de Constantin* d'Eusèbe, de la recension ε du *Roman d'Alexandre* et de la *Vie de Basile*, de textes apparentés qu'il qualifie de « fictional biographies ».

la composition de la *VB*. Ce qui fait encore défaut est une étude approfondie sur le rapport qu'entretient la *Vie*, en particulier sa première partie (2–18), avec le *Roman d'Alexandre* et une de ses nombreuses versions byzantines, pour parfaire ce domaine d'investigation[9]. On signale aussi souvent les rapports de la *VB* avec l'hagiographie et des textes comme la *Vie du patriarche Ignace*, de Nicétas David Paphlagon[10]. Sans exclure la possibilité d'affinités du texte avec des œuvres de la tradition classique, et tout en remarquant que notre auteur, en dépit d'un style souvent peu soigné et d'une syntaxe parfois fautive, a reçu son éducation dans une école où Homère, Plutarque et Libanios étaient amplement utilisés à travers la lecture de textes entiers ou d'anthologies, la question des sources d'inspiration et des influences reste encore ouverte.

Sans prétendre apporter une réponse à l'appartenance générique du texte, et considérant du reste la question d'un intérêt moindre pour notre propos, nous approcherons la *VB* à travers un questionnement concret portant sur la probabilité d'une lecture subversive de certains de ses épisodes. Selon Dimiter Angelov, la subversion dans un texte doit être détectée « through textual or intertextual analysis of writing strategies, such as concealment, deliberative contradiction and intentional dissimulation, based on the assumption that authors needed to hide their true views »[11]. À partir de cette définition large de la subversion littéraire, chaque texte impose ses propres conditions en rétrécissant ou en multipliant les perspectives de recherche. Dans le cas de la *VB* cependant, nous ne sommes pas face à n'importe quel texte, mais face à un éloge censé être écrit par Constantin Porphyrogénète en personne ou par un des savants de son entourage immédiat. Nous devons alors nous demander, en paraphrasant le titre d'un article très stimulant de Margaret Mullett : « Comment notre auteur critique-t-il le *laudandus* ? »[12]. En d'autres termes, la *VB* est-elle un éloge sans réserves du fondateur de la dynastie macédonienne ou est-elle un éloge qui laisse ouvertes certaines fenêtres à la subversion ?

Mullett propose une série de critères beaucoup plus précis pour dépister la subversion, procédé qui s'impose comme un choix interprétatif dès lors que le laudandus n'est pas écrit dans les termes conventionnels de l'éloge. Avec ses critères (omissions, substitutions, éloge dans les moments inadéquats, usages des topoi d'un autre genre littéraire, etc.), Mullett propose une sorte de grille de lecture applicable à tout texte et pouvant même servir à l'exclure de la liste des textes potentiellement subversifs. Ses conclusions seront le guide explicite ou implicite de notre investigation. La subversion dont nous parlons est un phénomène littéraire, une stratégie narrative qui réclame la complicité

9 Voir cependant Anagnostakis 1989; Markopoulos 2014.

10 Alexander 1940, 204; Gallina 2000, 192; Varona Codeso 2015.

11 Angelov 2013, 15.

12 Mullett 2013.

de l'auteur et du lecteur; c'est une affaire tant de lecture que d'écriture, voire même de lecture plus que d'écriture. L'interprétation de la part du lecteur est capitale pour que la subversion existe car, comme le souligne avec justesse Angelov, « subversive meaning could be discovered and even invented in the process of reception »[13].

BASILE PARMI LES BULGARES

Nous prendrons comme premier exemple un récit simple, à la structure élémentaire, puis nous nous efforcerons d'accéder à son sens codé et à la raison de son insertion dans la trame de la *VB* :

> (Omurtag, le chef des Bulgares) voyant que l'enfant Basile avait un aspect noble, souriait gracieusement et lui tournait autour (χαρίεν ὑπογελῶντα καὶ περισκαίροντα), l'attira vers lui et lui offrit une pomme impressionnante (μῆλον θαυμαστόν). L'enfant, innocemment et sans crainte, s'assit sur les genoux de l'archonte et démontra sa propre noblesse par cette réaction naturelle. L'archonte fut saisi de surprise cependant que son entourage était empli d'une colère sourde contre l'enfant (*VB* 4.25–35)[14].

Dans ce petit scénario, nous avons trois protagonistes liés entre eux par certaines actions et réactions : a) un roi qui agit et subit ensuite les effets de son action ; il invite, offre des cadeaux et, pour finir, il contemple surpris et émerveillé ; ce sont les verbes qui résument sa présence narrative (ἰδὼν, ἐφειλκύσατο, ἐπέδωκεν, ἐκπλαγῆναι), aucun qualificatif ou adjectif ne lui est attribué qui en ferait un portrait précis, une personnalité concrète, il représente simplement une fonction ; b) un enfant qui, au contraire, se voit attribuer principalement des qualificatifs et des adjectifs (ἐλευθέριον, χαρίεν, ὑπογελῶντα) ; il agit en image incomparable de grâce et de noblesse, et sa seule présence est le déclencheur des réactions des autres ; c) un groupe muet et sournois qui n'agit pas, et qui est caractérisé par ses ressentiments (διαγριαίνεσθαι). Les trois protagonistes encadrent un objet central, une pomme très grande (μῆλον θαυμαστὸν τῷ μεγέθει), offerte et reçue comme cadeau, qui provoque les diverses réactions.

Le récit est narrativement clos mais ses interprétations sont ouvertes, son sens réel restant en suspens pour le lecteur de jadis comme pour celui d'aujourd'hui[15]. Pour tenter d'accéder à son sens probable, nous allons examiner les deux composantes les plus importantes du récit : a) la pomme – l'objet qui porte la signification, b) l'enfant – le

[13] Angelov 2013, 12.

[14] Sauf indication contraire, les traductions, sont les nôtres.

[15] Voir p. ex., Moravcik 1961, 79–81, qui, en présentant les divers usages littéraires de la pomme, se limite à décrire l'épisode ; Littlewood 1974, 57, qui voit dans le récit « a prophetic indication of his (Basile) future imperial power » ; Angelov 2009, 112–13, qui parle d'un « portentous act » et interprète la pomme comme « a symbol of the orb of universal rule ». Kislinger 1981, insiste sur le contexte historique du rapport entre le jeune Basile et les Bulgares.

sujet visé par la signification. Le roi et ses acolytes ne sont, quant à eux, que les intermédiaires qui facilitent ou entravent le rapport devant s'instaurer entre sujet et objet.

L'énorme pomme de Basile rappelle une autre pomme, énorme elle aussi, présente dans l'historiographie à partir de Jean Malalas (μῆλον φρυγιατικὸν παμμέγεθες)[16]. Théophane, Georges le Moine, Syméon Logothète et les *Patria* en donnent chacun des versions aux IXe-Xe siècles, période qui nous intéresse, confirmant ainsi la popularité de cette histoire[17]. L'histoire est celle d'une pomme qui circule entre Théodose II, sa femme Eudocie et Paulinus, un ami intime de Théodose, et qui finit par conduire à la mort de ce dernier et à l'auto-exil de la reine. Une connotation érotique est souvent soulignée, bien que la pomme archétypale pose la question érotique sur la base d'une stratégie beaucoup plus large de détention du pouvoir réel ou symbolique[18]. Le jugement de Pâris, la matrice du récit, ne vise pas à désigner la plus belle des déesses mais celle qui lui promet la meilleure forme de pouvoir[19]. Pâris doit choisir entre l'art expérimenté de la guerre, représenté par Athéna, la souveraineté, représentée par Héra, et le pouvoir sur les femmes, représenté par Apéite. Il choisit le dernier en tant que pouvoir plus efficace et plus prestigieux que les autres. Une pomme offerte symbolise ainsi une préférence érotique, mais aussi l'accès à une certaine forme de pouvoir (c'est le cas, par exemple, de la pomme de Théophile dans le cadre du *concours de beauté*, la pomme annonçant le mariage et l'ascension au trône de la femme choisie)[20]. La pomme de Paulinus peut aussi bien être un appel érotique qu'une redistribution potentielle du

[16] Jean Malalas, *Histoire* 14.8 (p. 276–78).

[17] Théophane, *Histoire* 99.18–28; Georges le Moine, *Histoire* II 609.9–22 ; Syméon Logothète, *Histoire*, 97.1–2 (p. 124–25) ; *Patria*, 146 (p. 261–63). Sur la pomme de Paulinus, voir aussi Scharf 1990, surtout 446–50 ; von Esbroeck 2000 et Scott 2010, pour d'autres versions de l'histoire qui vise Pulchérie, la sœur de Théodose II.

[18] Selon Théophane (*Histoire*, 99.18–19), Paulinus « ἠγαπᾶτο παρὰ τῆς Εὐδοκίας ὡς λογιώτατος καὶ ὡραιότατος ». Sur la signification érotique de la pomme, Littlewood 1974, 34–39 ; sur la pomme de Paulinus, ibid., 46–47, où Littlewood considère que « there is nothing necessarily implausible about the basic story ». Cf. aussi, Procope de Gaza, op. III, 54.14–16 : « les Éros chaque fois qu'ils veulent jouer se lancent des pommes les uns aux autres en riant » ; Choniatès, 148, à propos de Seth Skleros qui provoque un amour maniaque chez une fille avec le don d'une pomme de Perse (une pêche), et un onirocriticon tardif (Manuel Paléologue, *Oneirocriticon*, 514. 29) : « Les pommes et les pêches signifient une disposition amoureuse ».

[19] Littlewood 1974, 44.

[20] Dželebdžić 2004. Sur le *concours de beauté* de Théophile et son historicité, voir Treadgold 1975 et 1979 ; Rydén 1985 ; Vinson 2004. La *Vie de l'impératrice Théodora* offre une version beaucoup plus complexe de l'histoire de la pomme et en propose des significations moralisatrices. Selon la *Vie* (3.11–26), il y a une pomme offerte par Théophile à toutes les candidates qui symboliseraient la chasteté de la future impératrice, préservée seulement par Théodora, et une pomme offerte par elle à Théophile comme contre-cadeau qui symboliserait leur progéniture.

pouvoir impérial. La réaction de Théodose, au-delà de la jalousie conjugale, confirme une telle éventualité[21].

Durant la période byzantine, la pomme acquiert une signification cosmique ; par sa couleur et sa brillance elle est identifiée au soleil[22] et elle illustre aussi l'évolution du temps[23]. Enfin, à partir de Jean Géomètre elle symbolise le pouvoir œcuménique de l'empereur romain[24]. Dans l'hagiographie du Xe siècle, la pomme renvoie au paradis et, loin d'être le fruit de la tentation, elle devient le fruit qui convient aux saintes personnes[25]. Par conséquent, dans le contexte de la *VB* la pomme offerte aurait-elle une insinuation érotique[26] ? Signifierait-elle la transmission du pouvoir impérial ? Serait-elle un indice prophétique selon lequel Basile deviendra le futur empereur de l'œcoumène, ou serait-elle un simple indice de son caractère exceptionnel et de ses affinités avec la sainteté ? La réaction de l'entourage du roi, telle que décrite dans le texte, pourrait s'expliquer par chacun de ces cas.

Le deuxième sujet significatif du récit est l'enfant. Le scénario littéraire de « l'enfant captif qui attire l'attention d'un chef barbare » s'avère assez populaire dans l'hagiographie médiobyzantine. Dans les plus anciens *Miracles* de saint Georges, datés des IXe–Xe siècles, le sujet est l'occasion de plusieurs réélaborations qui vont de l'histoire de l'enfant paphlagonien, captif des Bulgares[27], à celle de l'enfant de Mytilène, captif des Arabes[28]. Dans les *Miracles* de saint Nicolas, l'enfant, « fils d'un paysan » de Myra capturé pas les Agarènes, s'appelle même Basile[29]. Dans tous ces récits, l'enfant jouit

[21] Un écho lointain d'une histoire analogue, sans la dimension érotique, se trouve chez Plutarque, *Regum et imperatorum apophthegmata* 174a, à propos d'Artaxerxe le Mnémôn : πένητος δ' ἀνθρώπου μῆλον ὑπερφυὲς μεγέθει προσενέγκαντος αὐτῷ, δεξάμενος ἡδέως 'νὴ τὸν Μίθραν' εἶπεν, 'οὗτός μοι δοκεῖ καὶ πόλιν ἂν ἐκ μικρᾶς μεγάλην πιστευθεὶς ἀπεργάσασθαι'.

[22] Jean Géomètre, *Progymnasmata* V, p. 23.6–7.

[23] Jean Lydus, *De mensibus* 4.75.

[24] Sur les occurrences byzantines du *Reichsapfel*, apparue pour la première fois chez les écrits ecphrastiques de Jean Géomètre (V. p. 27.2–3: εὐγενείας ἅμα καὶ βασιλείας σύμβολον), voir Littlewood 1974, 55–57 ; Dzelebdzic 2004.

[25] *Vie d'Irène de Chrysobalanton*, 18, où trois pommes sont offertes de manière miraculeuse à la sainte protagoniste et trois au patriarche Ignace.

[26] Une allusion sexuelle n'est pas à exclure étant donné que dans d'autres occasions, des savants modernes ont cru découvrir de telles insinuations à propos de Basile et de Michel III. Cf. p ex. Tougher 1999.

[27] *Miracles de Georges*, 3 (*De iuvene Paphlagonensi capto* – histoire tirée du Paris. gr. 1604 du XIe s.) ; le jeune homme est le fils d'un duc dans la version du moine Théophane (§ 4, *De filio ducis Leonis capto in Paphlagonia* – histoire tirée du Mosquensis 381 de l'an 1028).

[28] *Miracles de Georges* 9 (*De iuvene Mytileneo capto*). Sur ce sujet, voir aussi Grotowski 2003.

[29] *Vie et miracles de Nicolas* 188–195; d'autres versions, ibid., 273–75 ; 409–10 ; 361–62. Cf. aussi les commentaires d'Anrich 1917, 407–12 et de Ševčenko 1983, 143–48.

d'une beauté et d'une grâce qui éblouissent le chef barbare[30]. Celui-ci fait de l'enfant (dans certaines versions, un jeune homme) son échanson, avant que ce dernier, accusé en raison de sa foi chrétienne, n'échappe miraculeusement à la colère barbare. Il s'agit évidemment là de versions christianisées de l'histoire de Zeus et de Ganymède[31], qui reflètent aussi une réalité plus précise, celle des *delicia* de l'époque romaine et protobyzantine, ces jeunes garçons qui accompagnaient en tant que pages les stratèges dans les campagnes militaires. Ce fut le cas, par exemple, du futur saint Dosithée (VIe siècle) qui était « page d'un général (δηλίκιον) et avait mené une vie très amollissante – les pages de tels personnages sont en effet toujours d'une grande mollesse »[32].

Si l'auteur de la *VB* avait reproduit ces récits hagiographiques pour faire de Basile un être protégé par les saints de Dieu, la présence de la pomme poserait alors problème car elle n'apparaît dans aucune des versions des récits hagiographiques concernant les jeunes personnes dans ces *Miracles*. De toute évidence, ces récits ne sont pas à la base du passage de la *VB* qui nous intéresse. Nous ne pouvons exclure, cependant, la possibilité que notre auteur eût connaissance de telles histoires « utiles à l'âme » et de leur potentiel narratif important et que, bien que ne les adoptant pas pour construire son récit, il ne les a pas ignorées complètement dans la construction d'un éventuel message, à savoir : l'exceptionnalité et la protection divine dont jouit Basile.

Dernièrement, Dejan Dželebdžić a rapproché cette histoire d'un récit d'Hérodote[33] qui parle de Perdiccas, le fondateur de la dynastie macédonienne des Argéades. Dans la version d'Hérodote, trois frères originaires d'Argos, dans le Péloponnèse, s'enfuient en Macédoine où ils se mettent au service du roi de la région. Le premier garde les chevaux, le second les bœufs et Perdiccas, le dernier, le petit bétail. Un présage pousse cependant le roi à les chasser de son service. Lorsque les frères réclament leur salaire, le roi, « égaré par un dieu », leur indique le soleil qui entre par la fenêtre comme étant le salaire qu'ils méritent. Les deux premiers frères en restent interdits et indignés, seul Perdiccas accepte et « d'un trait de couteau sur le sol du logis, entoure la tache de soleil », il feint de la fourrer dans son sac puis il part avec ses frères. Un membre de l'entourage royal fait alors « remarquer au roi la gravité de son acte et la façon judicieuse dont le plus jeune

[30] *Vie et miracles de Nicolas* 189.7–8: ὅς ἐπὶ τῷ κάλλει τοῦ παιδὸς μεγάλως εὐφρανθεὶς καὶ τὴν αὐτοῦ ὡραιότητα καὶ εὐφυΐαν θαυμάσας.

[31] Sur le même sujet en Occident, voir Kolve 1998.

[32] *Vie de Dosithée* 3.1–3 (124–25). Dans la *Passion des quinze martyrs de Tibérioupolis*, écrite par Théophylacte d'Achride, se trouve une autre version de la même thématique. Il s'agit de l'histoire d'un jeune homme, du nom de Kinamôn, qui, grâce à sa beauté et son caractère (§ 29: τὸ μὲν ἔξωθεν εἶδος λαμπρὸς καὶ ὡραῖος, τὴν δὲ ψυχικὴν εὐπρέπειαν τῶν κατ' αὐτὸν γενομένων ἐπισημότερος καὶ θεοειδέστερος) devient le préféré du fils de Kroumos avant de subir le martyre à cause de son persistance envers la foi chrétienne. Sur les *delicia* romains, voir Pomeroy 1992.

[33] Dželebdžić 2004 qui renvoie à Hérodote, 8.137–38.

des frères s'est emparé de ce qui leur était fait don ». Le roi, courroucé, décide alors de les poursuivre pour les mettre à mort mais ils sont sauvés par un fleuve infranchissable.

Les ressemblances de ce récit avec celui de la *VB* sont assez significatives : une même localisation, la Macédoine, et un roi étranger qui reçoit le héros comme un hôte et lui fait cadeau d'un symbole de la royauté, même de manière métaphorique (dans le cas d'Hérodote), un don qui annonce l'avènement du héros au trône d'un pays voisin. Pomme et soleil, comme nous l'avons déjà signalé, pourraient être des symboles de pouvoir cosmique ou œcuménique. Enfin, la remise du cadeau provoque une certaine réaction de l'entourage du roi. Les différences sont cependant suffisamment importantes. Trois jeunes frères, au lieu d'un enfant, travaillent au service du roi. Celui-ci n'admire ni leur beauté ni leur intelligence, il souhaite simplement les duper ; c'est l'astuce du petit frère qui, finalement, donne un sens au symbolisme solaire. La réaction de l'entourage royal n'est pas violente ; son conseiller explique au roi et au lecteur, de façon assez allusive, la signification de l'acte de Perdiccas. Pour toutes ces raisons, la proposition de Dželebdžić de faire de notre auteur un lecteur attentif d'Hérodote doit être écartée et nous devons en chercher une autre.

Un autre texte en revanche semble mieux correspondre, voire constituer la source de l'inspiration de l'histoire de Basile. Il s'agit du récit d'un épisode de la petite enfance de Moïse en captivité, que Flavius Josèphe livre dans ses *Antiquités Juives*:

> Quant à sa beauté (Moïse), personne n'y était assez indifférent pour n'être pas frappé, en apercevant Moïse, du charme de ses traits, et il arrivait souvent que des gens, le rencontrant porté en chemin, se retournent pour regarder l'enfant, et se distraient d'occupations sérieuses pour l'observer à loisir : la grâce enfantine était chez lui si parfaite et si pure qu'elle fascinait les regards. Tel était l'enfant que Thermouthis (la fille de Pharaon) adopta, le sort ne lui ayant pas donné de progéniture. Un jour, elle présenta Moïse à son père. Elle lui dit qu'elle se préoccupait de succession, et que si la volonté de Dieu lui avait refusé un fils légitime, elle avait justement élevé un enfant d'une beauté divine et d'un esprit généreux, qu'elle avait miraculeusement reçu de la grâce du fleuve: *J'ai songé*, dit-elle, *à en faire mon fils et l'héritier de ton royaume*. Elle mit alors l'enfant dans les bras de son père ; celui-ci le prit, le serra affectueusement sur sa poitrine, et pour plaire à sa fille, lui mit son diadème sur la tête. Mais Moïse l'ôta et le jeta à terre par une espièglerie d'enfant, et le foula même au pied. Ce geste parut un mauvais présage pour la royauté : voyant cela, le scribe qui avait prédit que sa naissance entraînerait l'abaissement de la puissance égyptienne se précipita pour le tuer, en proférant des cris violents : « C'est justement cet enfant que selon la révélation de Dieu nous devons tuer pour être délivrés de la crainte ; son geste confirme la prédiction : il a insulté ton pouvoir, et piétiné ton diadème. Fais-le disparaître : tu dissiperas la crainte qu'il inspire aux Égyptiens et tu retireras aux Hébreux l'espérance née de cet acte audacieux ». Mais Thermouthis le devança, et s'assura de l'enfant ; le roi était hésitant pour ce meurtre, rendu tel sous l'influence de Dieu qui veillait au salut de Moïse[34].

[34] Josèphe, *Antiquités Juives* 2.231–36 (122–3). La même histoire est reprise par Michel Glykas, *Histoire* 280.13–281.2, mais de manière beaucoup plus concise. La présence de Josèphe dans l'historiographie médiobyzantine n'a pas été encore bien mesurée. Sur l'influence de Josèphe dans

Ici les ressemblances sont beaucoup plus frappantes et les différences plus facilement expliquées. Il s'agit de deux enfants qui vivent en captivité, sont pleins de beauté et de grâce, attirent les regards admiratifs de tous et provoquent l'attention des rois. Alors que Moïse est adopté et présenté comme le successeur d'une famille royale sans progéniture, Basile est transféré en Bulgarie avec toute sa famille. Moïse reçoit le diadème, Basile une pomme énorme, objets qui résument la royauté. Diadème et pomme ne sont pas complètement interchangeables : le diadème symbolise une royauté précise, l'égyptienne, tandis que la pomme est un symbole beaucoup plus large, renvoyant à la domination sur l'écoumène. C'est pourquoi Moïse est légitimé à fouler aux pieds le diadème, niant ainsi la couronne des Égyptiens, alors que Basile n'a qu'à se réjouir du cadeau reçu. La réaction des conseillers royaux diffère et est adaptée à ce qui est mis en jeu dans chaque contexte, le futur du royaume égyptien d'un côté, la menace lointaine d'un souverain œcuménique de l'autre.

Au-delà de ces divergences, un récit semble être taillé sur l'autre. L'auteur imite le scénario mais prend toutes les distances possibles d'une copie fidèle du texte-origine. Il utilise l'histoire de Moïse, mais l'adapte selon les besoins de son personnage et de ses objectifs d'auteur. L'identification entre Basile et Moïse ne s'offre pas d'elle-même, elle doit être décodée par un lecteur attentif. Si l'intention de l'auteur avait été l'équation facile de deux personnages, il aurait procédé à une comparaison du type de celles auxquelles les Byzantins étaient habitués, en identifiant directement Moïse à Basile et Omourtag à Pharaon, au moyen de citations bibliques directes. Mais dès lors que l'auteur, plutôt qu'une citation directe, crée un épisode narratif entier, le décodage devient un processus beaucoup plus complexe. Dans la citation, le sens est donné d'avance ; dans l'épisode exemplaire, il est à reconstruire. La liberté de l'auteur avec la citation est assez limitée ; le plus qu'il puisse faire est de la manipuler astucieusement pour la faire converger vers ses propres paroles. Avec l'épisode narratif, l'auteur est beaucoup plus libre et devient un vrai créateur dans les limites, certes, imposées par l'imitation, qui n'est pas une reproduction fidèle mais un re-travail conscient de *fictionnalisation*, selon Genette[35].

Avec l'introduction de ce petit épisode, et d'autres analogues que nous n'examinerons pas ici, l'auteur vise à présenter son héros comme l'incarnation successive des trois figures bibliques majeures[36]. Pendant sa petite enfance, Basile s'identifie à Moïse

un autre texte de la période médiobyzantine, le *Récit sur la construction de Sainte-Sophie*, voir Dagron 1984, 293–303.

[35] Genette 2004^3, 41.

[36] Sur la typologie de la présentation des modèles bibliques dans la littérature byzantine, Delouis 2003 ; Rapp 2010. Sur Moïse comme modèle voir plus particulièrement Rapp 1998 ; Déroche 2015 ; sur la présence de Moïse comme modèle à l'époque de Constantin Porphyrogénète,

en raison de l'exil/captivité ; sa jeunesse et la période qui précèdent son ascension au trône l'assimilent à David. Pas seulement en raison de sa victoire sur le lutteur bulgare, son Goliath, qu'il terrasse dans un épisode de combat individuel (*VB* 12)[37], exploit qui lui octroie de la visibilité sociale (ἀπόβλεπτος ἤδη καθεστηκώς) et lui ouvre les portes du palais, mais aussi en raison de la dédicace que ses enfants sculptent dans une église pour remercier Dieu d'avoir élevé leur père de la « pauvreté davidique (ἐκ πτωχείας δαυιτικῆς) » à la royauté œcuménique (*VB* 89). Enfin, la période de son règne l'identifie à Salomon. L'épisode de Daniélis et de sa visite à Constantinople[38], ainsi que l'activité de bâtisseur qu'il exerce sont des éléments qui corroborent cette identification. Les micro-histoires (διηγήσεις, διηγήματα) contenues dans la *VB* servent à démontrer l'exemplarité du personnage, fût-elle positive ou négative, et l'Ancient Testament, plus que l'héritage classique, « provided the necessary substructure for the *enkōmion* to Basil I and his dynasty »[39] ; les micro-histoires dévoilent la créativité de l'auteur, qui anime une narration dont le traitement littéraire peut avoir été aussi bien annalistique que strictement *historique*.

Vu sous cet angle, l'épisode du cadeau de la pomme, pour revenir à notre histoire initiale, n'est pas une simple histoire qui cherche à divertir les lecteurs, il acquiert plutôt le statut d'un « messager » idéologique. Dans un premier niveau de lecture, l'épisode montre la destinée d'un enfant prodige, capable de soumettre les autres à son charme et de recevoir des cadeaux de choix qui annoncent probablement son avenir glorieux. Dans un second niveau de lecture, à travers un savant rapport d'intertextualité, l'auteur souligne les affinités de l'enfant avec une figure biblique des plus éminentes, Moïse en exil, avec toutes les conséquences qu'une telle équation enchaîne.

N'y aurait-il pas, cependant, un troisième niveau de lecture qui ne s'adresserait plus à un public moyen, nourri d'histoires pieuses et d'attentes de lecture précises, mais à un public beaucoup plus instruit avec lequel toute écriture devient un jeu de virtuosité, une sorte de *display* (ἐπίδειξις)[40], un commentaire autoréférentiel et un palimpseste littéraire, un texte qui finalement contient entre ses lignes sa version parodique ? L'auteur

voir Markopoulos 2012 ; sur les rapports de Basile avec David, Agapitos 1989, 293; Markopoulos 2013, 949–50 et 2014, 572 ; sur les paradigmes bibliques des premiers empereurs macédoniens, Dagron 1996, 201–25 ; sur le paradigme de Salomon au cours de la même période, Anagnostakis 1989 et 2008; Tougher 1997, 122–32 ; pour la période byzantine tardive, Angelov 2007, 86–90 ; sur la présence de l'Ancient Testament dans les récits historiographiques byzantins, Jeffreys 2010 et Rapp 2010.

37 Kislinger 1981.

38 Sur l'interprétation de cet épisode, voir Anagnostakis 1989 et 2008.

39 Markopoulos 2014, 572.

40 Sur cette notion dans le contexte littéraire à Byzance, voir Bernard 2014, 50.

joue-t-il avec la gamme des possibilités narratives, de sorte qu'en écrivant un éloge il tisse en même temps la trame d'un texte beaucoup plus nuancé voire indécis ?

Avant d'avancer une réponse, résumons les trois niveaux de lecture et de signification possibles qu'un texte littéraire byzantin offre à ses lecteurs. Le premier niveau consiste en ce que dit explicitement le récit, c'est l'acte même de l'énonciation. Le second niveau consiste en une lecture explicative, dans le cas où l'auteur ramène son histoire ou ses micro-récits à une typologie littéraire et idéologique, classique ou biblique, signifiante, ce que nous appelons mimésis, autrement dit un travail qui consiste à ritualiser tout récit en l'insérant dans la tradition. Ce second niveau définit le plus souvent le passage d'un texte, tout court, au texte littéraire, il est l'article le plus important du protocole de la littéralité byzantine. Le troisième niveau suppose un auteur habile qui, exploitant plusieurs des potentialités mimétiques, crée un texte éclectique et polyphonique, un texte baroque qui, sous l'effet cumulatif des renvois, touche à sa propre parodisation. Le troisième niveau suppose un public très exigeant, « capable de coopérer à l'actualisation textuelle de la façon dont … l'auteur la pensait »[41], capable aussi de participer au jeu de l'auteur dont la lecture devient un terrain d'interprétation et de décodage, parfois tendancieux ou aléatoire.

Si l'on adopte la terminologie de Psellos[42], qui divise les récepteurs du texte littéraire en trois catégories, nous dirons que le premier niveau de lecture s'adresse à des ἰδιώτιδες ἀκοαί, autrement dit un public général composé exclusivement (?) d'auditeurs sans exigences particulières, qui s'en tiennent la plupart du temps à leurs premières impressions du texte. Le deuxième niveau de lecture s'adresse aux σπουδαῖοι, un public cultivé composé principalement d'auditeurs (ἐλλόγιμοι ἀκροαταί). Grâce à ses lectures, ce public est en mesure d'identifier plusieurs des récits *exemplaires* cités par l'auteur. Le troisième niveau, dans les rares cas où il se présente, s'adresse aux περιττοί, des personnes très instruites qui « cherchent… la sagesse en vue d'écrire pour en faire démonstration, et non pour l'utilité et l'accomplissement d'un caractère (βούλονται […] τὴν σοφίαν πρὸς ἐπίδειξιν πάντα γεγράφθαι, οὐ πρὸς ὠφέλειαν καὶ ἤθους κατόρθωσιν) »[43], ou à tous ceux qui s'exercent aux virtualités de la rhétorique (ὑμῖν ἐνδείξασθαι ὅσα ὁ λόγος δεδύνηται[44]). Il s'agit, dans ce cas, de collègues de l'auteur et de professionnels de l'écriture. Comme Mullett l'a constaté, « in a highly developed, highly sophisticated literary society it would seem very unlikely that a subtext was not audible to fellow-practitioners and the

[41] Eco 1985, 68.

[42] Michel Psellos, *Éloge de Syméon Métaphraste* 230–63. Cf. aussi Cavallo 2012, Bernard 2014, 54–55 ; Markopoulos 2015, 56–57.

[43] Michel Psellos, *Éloge de Syméon Métaphraste* 240–42.

[44] Michel Psellos, *Éloge de la puce* 121–22.

very best educated of the audience »[45]. Le troisième niveau de lecture, comme nous l'avons signalé plus haut, peut être indépendant des intentions de l'auteur, et découler souvent de sa maladresse à manier l'intertextualité.

En ce qui concerne la *VB,* l'auteur déclare dans ses digressions ecphrastiques qu'il s'adresse aux σπουδαῖοι, soit à la deuxième catégorie de lecteurs (87, ἀνάγκη διὰ τῆς γραφῆς παρατεθῆναι τῶν σπουδαίων ταῖς ἀκοαῖς), mais ses interventions et ses commentaires métalittéraires révèlent une personne disposant de perspicacité et d'humour, des signaux qui peuvent être adressés à des collègues afin de les inciter à repenser les éventualités interprétatives du texte. Dans ce contexte littéraire, l'histoire de la pomme peut alors aussi bien être une exaltation dans l'éloge, avec l'équation de Basile à Moïse, qu'un indice qui mesure la distance et l'écart entre l'auteur et l'objet de sa narration, avec cette insinuation perfide de la ressemblance de Basile à un *delicium* du chef bulgare.

Afin d'obtenir une réponse sur l'éventualité d'un troisième niveau de signification, avec toutes les précautions dues à une analyse de cette sorte, il nous faudra expliquer certains choix de l'auteur qui, du reste, demeurent incompréhensibles. Pour ce faire, nous nous limiterons à l'examen des instances de l'érotisation implicite du héros pendant la période précédant son ascension au trône, tout en regardant les rares passages où l'auteur cite les défauts explicites de celui-ci.

BASILE ET LE CHEVAL ROYAL

Outre l'histoire de la pomme, qui pourrait combiner éléments prophétiques et allusions érotiques, une autre histoire à connotation multiple est celle du *domptage* du cheval fougueux de Michel III :

> L'empereur Michel avait un cheval fougueux et rétif, indocile et altier, excellant en tout, bon, majestueux pour la prestance, la beauté et la vitesse, et admirable. Si d'aventure il était détaché de sa corde ou libéré d'une quelconque manière, il était très difficile de le capturer et ceux qui s'occupaient de lui avaient beaucoup de mal à le maîtriser. Un jour que l'empereur était sorti chasser, chevauchant ce même cheval, il frappa un lièvre avec un bâton lancé de sa propre main. Emporté par le plaisir (ὑφ' ἡδονῆς), il descendit du cheval pour abattre le lièvre. Laissé sans surveillance, le cheval s'échappa et, malgré la mobilisation de plusieurs personnes et l'intervention des chefs des écuries, des *magglavitai* et du personnel à leurs côtés, il fut impossible de le capturer. Courroucé, l'empereur ordonna qu'on coupe les tendons des deux pattes arrière de l'animal si l'on venait à s'en saisir. Le césar Bardas, qui était présent, supplia l'empereur de ne pas abîmer sans raison et pour une seule faute un si excellent cheval. Basile, qui accompagnait son maître, dit à ce dernier : « Si j'arrive à atteindre le cheval royal et qu'en sautant du mien je puis l'enfourcher, l'empereur se fâchera-t-il contre moi, étant donné que le cheval est orné des harnais impériaux ? ». Après qu'on eut transmis à l'empereur ces propos et que celui-ci eut don-

[45] Mullett 2013, 248 et 261: "the technical aspects of rhetorical genre, taught to enable maximal praise, could be used, in a literary society where the audience was as learned as the author, in order to achieve subversion".

né son accord, Basile s'acquitta de cette tâche avec efficacité et intelligence. Quand l'empereur le vit, il fut admiratif de sa bravoure et de sa sagesse (*ἀγαπήσας τὴν μετ᾽ ἀνδρίας εὐφυίαν αὐτοῦ καὶ σύνεσιν*) et il le prit sur-le-champ du service de Théophilitzès en le plaçant parmi les *stratores* royaux. Il était attentionné envers lui et l'aimait, car il voyait que Basile surpassait les autres en tout (*προσεῖχε δὲ καὶ ἠγάπα αὐτόν, ὁρῶν αὐτοῦ τὸ πρὸς τοὺς ἄλλους ἐν πᾶσι διαφέρον κατὰ πολύ*). C'est la raison pour laquelle il lui attribua l'office de prôtostrator, après que Basile eut fait de nombreuses fois devant lui la démonstration de sa bravoure (*VB* 13).

Le récit s'insère dans un ensemble d'épisodes de chasse qui sont porteurs, dans le cadre de la *Vie*, de messages « prophétiques » multiples[46]. Le plus souvent symbole d'ascension au trône, la chasse ne fonctionne que comme prolepse qui annonce le destin triomphal de Basile et la disparition de Michel[47]. Le passage commence par une présentation du cheval, autour duquel tourne l'action. Michel le chevauche et se rend à la chasse au lièvre, il en trouve un et, « emporté par le plaisir (ὑφ᾽ ἡδονῆς) », descend du cheval pour le capturer et l'abattre. Chacun se mobilise alors pour attraper le cheval, mais en vain. Courroucé, Michel décide, au cas où l'animal serait capturé, de lui couper les tendons des deux pattes arrière, décision qui provoque la tristesse et l'angoisse de Bardas. À ce moment critique, Basile s'adresse à Théophilitzès et demande la permission d'intervenir, tout en ayant connaissance des dangers *constitutionnels* que peut entraîner le fait de monter le cheval de l'empereur. L'efficacité et l'intelligence de Basile contribuent à l'introduire dans l'intimité de l'empereur.

Chez les autres historiens de cette période, le domptage du cheval n'est pas inséré dans le cadre de la chasse, mais rappelle plutôt l'épisode d'Alexandre ou celui de Bellérophon, comme Génésios cite explicitement[48], alors que dans la *Vie* le cheval a été déjà dompté par Michel III et l'insertion de l'épisode dans une scène de chasse pourrait attribuer un nouveau sens, symbolique, à toute la mise en scène. Ce sens nous échappe, sans que l'on puisse découvrir la source d'inspiration de l'épisode[49]. L'intervention de

[46] Sur ce récit et ses réminiscences littéraires classiques et byzantines, voir Moravcik 1961, 99–103. Cf. aussi Patlagean 1992, 258.

[47] Bardas prédit la catastrophe de sa famille après que Basile tue un loup énorme lors d'une expédition de chasse (*VB* 14.10–14). Sur la mort du loup, comme présage de fin d'une dynastie, voir Patlagean 1992, 262. Théodora, la mère de Michel, arrive à la même prédiction, après une autre chasse (*VB* 15). La chasse scelle le sort de Michel, mais elle sera fatale aussi à Basile car la maladie qui causera sa mort se déclare après sa participation à une partie de chasse (*VB* 102.2–3). La meilleure présentation de la liaison entre chasse et la mort de Basile, dans la *Vie d'Euthyme*, ch. 1.

[48] Georges Génésios, *Histoire*, 78.44–45 : ὡς εἴ τις ἄλλος Βουκεφάλου Ἀλέξανδρος, ὡς Βελλεροφόντης Πηγάσῳ γενναίως ἱππάζεται. Chez Génésios (*Histoire*, 78–79) et Pseudo-Syméon (*Histoire*, 655.7–18), le cheval indomptable a été offert à Michel qui ne pouvait pas l'approcher et que le seul qui a pu le dompter était Basile.

[49] Markopoulos 2015, 66, n. 57, considère cette histoire comme un récit édifiant. Cf. aussi Moravcik 1961, 99–100.

Bardas, par exemple, ne sert aucun but narratif ou politique évident. Son rôle ne s'explique alors qu'en référence au sous-texte de ce récit.

Monter le cheval royal n'est permis à Basile que du moment où Michel décide de se séparer de son animal et après la permission impériale d'agir conséquemment. Basile manifeste tout à la fois sa capacité, son courage et sa loyauté. Tout cela reste au premier niveau de signification, adressé à tout lecteur ou auditeur. Dans un deuxième degré de signification, le cheval devient une métonymie de la royauté. Basile dompterait et dirigerait un pouvoir impérial capricieux, mais plein de beauté et de charme. Le deuxième niveau fournirait tout son potentiel interprétatif si nous avions localisé son hypertexte.

Mais c'est à un troisième niveau d'interprétation que nous poussent certains éléments littéraires et culturels précis. Ce que nous pouvons d'abord souligner, c'est l'imagerie érotique du récit. La chasse au lièvre est dans la tradition ancienne la chasse (homo-)érotique par excellence[50], une chasse qui donne à Michel tant de plaisir qu'il se sépare de sa monture, son alter ego féminin selon une logique militaire très présente dans les cantilènes populaires notamment, logique suivant laquelle un rapport de complicité totale et presque érotique s'instaure entre un cavalier et son cheval[51]. En conséquence, dominer le cheval d'autrui revient en quelque sorte à dominer celui-ci. Si la monture constitue l'aspect féminin du cavalier, chaque rapport qui s'établit avec elle vise d'abord son propriétaire. Tout comme dans l'histoire de la pomme, les symboles impériaux ou dynastiques, de même que les efforts pour les conquérir, sont présentés comme des efforts éminemment érotisés. Nous sommes dans une société où le langage de l'érotisme n'est qu'une version du langage du pouvoir et où le rapport avec le pouvoir, y compris celui instauré entre les humains et Dieu, adopte souvent les allures et le vocabulaire du rapport érotique.

Il y a plus encore. Un lecteur avisé discernerait-il derrière ce scénario élémentaire, truffé d'allusions érotiques, héroïques et littéraires, une manière codée d'évoquer le ménage à trois instauré entre Michel, Basile et Eudocie Ingerina[52] ? Si tel était le cas, l'histoire que l'auteur aurait souhaité véhiculer, à travers ce récit semblable à un conte populaire, serait la suivante : Michel avait un cheval d'une incomparable beauté, mais sauvage et indomptable, à savoir Eudocie Ingerina ; il s'accordait aussi occasionnellement des amours masculines (la chasse aux lièvres), qui semblaient avoir sa préférence puisqu'il abandonne sa monture, même momentanément, pour profiter de son

[50] Sur la signification (homo-)érotique de la chasse au lièvre pendant l'antiquité classique, voir Schnapp 1997, 318–54.

[51] Sur les rapports entre héros populaires et leurs chevaux, voir Romaios 1968 ; Karagiannis-Moser 1997, 83–118 ; Katsaros 2013. Plus généralement, sur la culture du cheval à Byzance, voir Anagnostakis & Papamastorakis 2011.

[52] Sur ce ménage, voir Kislinger 1983 ; Karlin-Hayter 1991.

gibier ; jalouse, la monture prend la fuite et Michel décide de la punir (διακοπῆναι τοὺς ὀπισθίους αὐτοῦ τῶν ποδῶν). L'intervention de Bardas apaise sa colère et c'est Basile qui se propose de le délivrer de la présence accablante de sa compagne. En abandonnant son propre cheval, autrement dit sa première femme, Michel permet à Basile de chevaucher et de dompter complétement (par le mariage ?) la fière Ingerina. En agissant ainsi, Basile s'attire l'admiration et l'amour de Michel, et devient l'objet de ses attentions érotiques. Vers cette direction nous oriente implicitement le récit de Génésios qui présente comme un rapport de cause à effet le domptage du cheval, l'attribution à Basile du titre de patrice et son mariage avec Ingerina[53].

Les deux récits examinés, celui de la pomme et celui du cheval, sont des digressions[54] qui présentent la jeunesse de Basile sous un angle romanesque[55]. Basile acquiert les caractéristiques d'un héros de roman hellénistique, mais d'un héros particulier qui a aimé la royauté qui l'attend, qui n'a aucun sentiment précis autre que sa quête d'ascension, qui ne dispose d'aucune profondeur psychologique si ce n'est l'image captée par le regard des autres, devenant l'objet de la convoitise d'autrui. Il n'agit que comme un éromène de la tradition littéraire classique.

BASILE ET ANTI-BASILE

Dans le troisième cas que nous citerons, Basile est en train de perdre sa jeunesse et de devenir adulte. Il cesse d'être l'objet de l'attention érotique des représentants du pouvoir et il s'en faut même de peu qu'il perde sa place :

> Puisque l'empereur ne trouvait aucun moyen ni aucun prétexte pour supprimer Basile, il prit une décision cruelle et illégale ; il pensa associer au pouvoir un autre conjoint. Il y avait une personne répondant au sobriquet de Basilikinos, un membre, lui aussi, de son groupe sacrilège, un caractère vicieux, un infâme efféminé, un fêtard (φαῦλον καὶ μιαρὸν θηλυδρίαν τε καὶ φιλόκωμον) originaire de Nicomédie, frère de Constantin qu'on appelait Kapnogénès (Barbe-brûlée) [...] Michel revêt ce Basilikinos, au surnom maudit, du très célébré pourpre royal, de la couronne splendide et enviable, du *chlamis* en or, des chaussures couleur pourpre et incrustées de pierres précieuses, et de tous les insignes du pouvoir impérial, puis il le conduit devant le Sénat en le tenant par la main et en lui portant toute attention, comme le fameux Néron envers le très notoire Éros, et dit mot à mot : « Voyez tous et admirez, la royauté ne lui va-t-elle pas à merveille ? Il a la mine d'un roi, la couronne fait partie de sa nature, tout en lui correspond à l'office ». Il disait aussi : « Combien il est mieux de faire celui-ci empereur au lieu de Basile ! » (tout cela provoqua l'indignation de tous, qui constatèrent la folie de Michel) (*VB* 25).

[53] Génésios, *Histoire*, 79. 47–49.

[54] Sur le rôle des digressions dans un texte historiographique, voir Papaioannou 2010, 16 ; Varona Codeso 2015, 185. Pour la *VB*, ce que nous appelons *digressions* (διηγήματα) sont des parties constituantes de la trame historique, selon les déclarations mêmes du titre du texte (ἀπὸ διαφόρων ἀθροίσας διηγημάτων). Sur cet aspect, voir Anagnostakis 1999, 106–7.

[55] Sur la novélisation du récit historique durant cette période, voir Markopoulos 2014.

Cette histoire qui renvoie explicitement à Néron et à son *mariage* avec Sporus, ou dans certaines versions avec Éros, vise à dénoncer Michel en laissant cette fois la porte grand ouverte à l'accusation sur ses rapports sexuels illicites[56]. Mais cela n'est que la première impression. Michel est accusé du choix de la personne plutôt que du rapport qu'il instaure avec elle ; du reste, le mariage n'est qu'une forme métonymique de l'association de Basilikinos au pouvoir. Mais la signification profonde de cette histoire ne s'éclaircit pas pour autant. Tout ce qu'il y est dit concerne les premier et deuxième niveaux de signification qui, comme nous l'avons dit, sont fournis cette fois par l'auteur par la référence explicite à Néron. Pour reconstituer un probable troisième niveau, revenons à certains points qui n'auraient certainement pas échappé à des lecteurs avisés. Grâce à sa beauté, à sa jeunesse et à ses exploits prometteurs, Basile a accédé à un poste administratif, celui de *parakoimomenos,* poste détenu exclusivement jusqu'alors par des eunuques. Cependant, pour servir à ce poste il a symboliquement renoncé à sa masculinité, il s'est féminisé face à Michel et il est devenu son *eunuque* préféré[57]. La caractéristique la plus frappante de Basilikinos, qui doit le remplacer à ce poste, est justement l'effémination. Il est devenu pratiquement le nouveau *parakoimōmenos* puisque, selon Syméon le Logothète, il dormait dans la chambre de l'empereur au moment de son assassinat[58]. Rien n'exclut ainsi que la prétendue origine bithynienne de Basilikinos ne soit qu'un jeu savant qui renvoie à Nicomède, le roi de Bithynie, et à l'effémination qu'il imposa à Jules César, devenu son échanson et son compagnon de lit[59].

Le nom Basilikinos, enfin – notre auteur le laisse entendre – n'est pas son vrai nom, mais une sorte de sobriquet (τὸν κατ' ἐπωνυμίαν Βασιλικῖνον). Or, Basilikinos fait écho au nom de Basile = Basileios-Basilis, il pourrait donc être un autre Basile, une figure de diminution (un petit Basile) ou une figure de substitution (Basilikinos = *Basilis ekeinos*) voire, pis encore, le résultat d'un composé entre Basilis et le verbe κινῶ (mettre en mouvement, remuer), mot qui rappelle celui de κίναιδος. Il s'agirait alors d'un dédoublement : Basilikinos ne serait que la version grotesque de Basile, sa réalité hideuse cachée derrière l'apparence brillante de son éloge. On accuserait ainsi Basilikinos de ce qu'on voudrait accuser réellement Basile. Basilikinos est présenté dans d'autres récits de l'époque sous une forme de nom différente (Basikinos, Basiliskianos)[60], mais le sce-

56 Sur le portrait de Michel III dans la *VB*, Jenkins 1948 ; Kislinger 1987 ; Ljubarskij 1987 ; Vinson 2000; Varona 2009, 765–68 ; Gallina 2010. Sur l'épisode de Basilikinos, voir plus particulièrement Gallina 2010, 79–82.

57 Karlin-Hayter 1991, 98–99 et 110 ; Messis 2014, 348–49.

58 Syméon Logothète, *Histoire*, 131.49 (p. 267): ἔνδοθεν δὲ τοῦ κοιτῶνος ἦν Βασιλισκιανὸς τῇ κελεύσει τοῦ βασιλέως ὑπνώσας ἐν τῇ κλίνῃ Ῥεντακίου πρὸς φυλακὴν αὐτοῦ.

59 Sur César et Nicomède, voir Osgood 2008.

60 Basiliskianos : Syméon Logothète, *Histoire*, 131.46 (p. 256) ; Ps-Syméon, *Histoire*, 682–83 ; 'Georges le Moine', *Continué* I, 835–37 ; 'Georges le Moine', *Continué* II, p. 5–6 ; Basikinos, est

nario du mariage n'est qu'une invention de notre auteur, son propre apport à l'histoire de Basile. Même si Basilikinos est une personne réelle, notre auteur fait de lui un personnage qu'il instrumentalise par la suite pour créer l'effet de lecture voulu.

On objectera sans doute que toutes ces insinuations érotiques ne constituent pas des indices sûrs d'une attitude subversive de l'auteur envers le sujet de son texte et que la transformation du héros en objet d'attention érotique, loin de semer le doute sur la morale du personnage central, pourrait n'être qu'une stratégie pour consolider son éloge. Soit. Mais alors, que se passe-t-il dans la deuxième partie du texte, celle qui décrit le règne de Basile, du moment qu'il a atteint la maturité et que son érotisation envers les puissants cesse d'être un choix narratif plausible ?

Dans la première partie déjà, la responsabilité morale que l'auteur attribue à Basile pour le meurtre de Bardas, en faisant de lui l'acolyte fidèle de Michel III au moment où toutes les personnes chargées de perpétrer le meurtre renoncent, est accablante (*VB* 17). Cette insistance de l'auteur sur l'implication de Basile dans le meurtre de Bardas, étant donné qu'il occulte complétement sa participation au meurtre de Michel, appelle une explication[61]. Une explication est aussi demandée quant à la *protection* que l'auteur offre à Théophile (*VB* 27), présenté sans aucune allusion à son iconoclasme[62], à Théodora et même à Bardas, pour qui il ne reproduit pas les accusations dont Nicétas Paphlagon s'était servi dans la *Vie d'Ignace*, sur son rapport adultère avec sa belle-fille[63]. Une autre explication est demandée aussi sur le fait que l'auteur accuse Basile de deux défauts très sérieux, des péchés capitaux pour un roi : céder à la flatterie et à la colère démesurée (*VB* 50, sur la flatterie; § 48, 70, 100 sur la colère)[64]. Une dernière explication est enfin requise sur le fait que l'auteur attribue à Basile une série de meurtres absurdes perpétrés contre des captifs ou contre les populations locales, pour des raisons totalement immorales pour un élu de Dieu (§ 49). Dans ces descriptions, aucune référence à la providence divine et au rôle qu'elle attribue à Basile n'apparaît.

Maladresse ou préméditation, le portrait de Basile, pour élogieux qu'il soit, laisse des ombres sérieuses dont la présence doit d'abord être interprétée au cas par cas, avant de procéder à une évaluation globale du texte.

l'écriture du ms Vat.gr. 167, dans le livre IV de Théophane Continué (IV.44.11, voir l'apparat critique de l'édition de Featherstone & Signes Codonez). Cf. aussi Gallina 2010, 79 n. 108.

61 Sur cet épisode, voir aussi Varona 2009, 757–62.

62 Sur la question complexe de l'image de Théophile dans les textes byzantins, voir Markopoulos 1998.

63 *Vie d'Ignace* 17.

64 Agapitos 1989, 316–17.

CONCLUSION

La *VB* est-elle un texte à l'insupportable candeur, un ouvrage qui se livre, outre à un éloge, à un jeu d'humour complice avec des lecteurs avisés ou est-ce une création incomparablement pamphlétaire ? Notre auteur est-il un homme maladroit qui laisse son texte exposé à toute lecture tendancieuse, ou est-il un humoriste et un virtuose de l'écriture qui adresse son texte à des publics multiples, dont des personnes qui jouent, en employant une codification extrême, avec les emblèmes sacro-saints de leur culture, les saints et les rois, et leur hybridation : les rois qui prétendent être des saints ?

Sommes-nous autorisés, enfin, à interroger de la sorte un texte considéré jusqu'à présent comme un éloge « orthodoxe », un produit de Constantin VII lui-même ou d'un des savants de son cercle pour légitimer son propre pouvoir ou pour répondre aux rumeurs qui voulaient que son père soit le bâtard de Michel III[65], un effort entrepris déjà par Léon VI dans son *Oraison funèbre*[66] ? Sans pouvoir proposer une réponse définitive, faisons seulement deux remarques : a) le dépistage de la subversion est un choix de lecture qui se fonde sur les indices intentionnels que l'auteur insère dans son texte, ainsi que sur les défaillances du texte à jouer le rôle qu'il déclare avoir l'intention de jouer de manière programmatique ; b) les savants qui s'adressent au jeune Romain II, le fils de Constantin VII, ne font remonter son origine ni à la dynastie amorienne ni à Basile Ier ; ils tissent l'éloge en le présentant comme le descendant d'une nouvelle dynastie, celle de Léon VI : « Que la descendance de Léon, la très noble, puisse durer jusqu'à la fin des temps » (*καὶ γὰρ κρατήσει* [ou mieux *κρατήσοι*] *μέχρι τέρματος χρόνων γονὴ Λέοντος ἡ πανευγενεστάτη*)[67].

[65] Un résumé de la question, dans Tougher 1997, 42–67.
[66] Odorico 1983.
[67] Odorico 1987, v. 89–90.

RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Sources primaires

Choniatès, Nicétas, *Histoire*. Éd. I. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae historia*. CFHB 11, Berlin and New York 1975.

Génésios, *Histoire*. Éd. A. Lesmueller-Werner and I. Thurn, *Iosephi Genesii regum libri quattuor*. CFHB 14, Berlin and New York 1978.

Géomètre, Jean, *Progymnasmata*. Éd. A. Littlewood, *The Progymnasmata of Ioannes Geometres*. Amsterdam 1972.

Georges le Moine, *Histoire*. Éd. C. de Boor and P. Wirth, *Georgii Monachi chronicon*, 2 vols, Leipzig 1978.

'Georges le Moine', *Continué I*. Éd. I. Bekker, *Theophanes Continuatus*. CSHB, Bonn 1838, 763–924.

'Georges le Moine', *Continué II*. Éd. B. Istrin, *Chronika Georgij Amartola*. Petersburg 1922.

Glykas, Michel, *Histoire*. Éd. I. Bekker, *Glycae Michaelis, annales*. CSHB, Bonn 1836.

Hérodote, *Histoire*. Éd. P. Legrand, *Hérodote Histoires VIII*. Paris 1973.

Josèphe, *Antiquités Juives*. Éd. tr. E. Nodet, *Flavius Josèphe, Les antiquités juives, livres I à III*. Paris 20033.

Lydus, Jean, *De mensibus*. Éd. R. Wünsch, *Ioannis Lydi liber de mensibus*. Leipzig 1898.

Malalas, Jean, *Histoire*. Éd. I. Thurn, *Ioannis Malalae chronographia*. CFHB 35, Berlin and New York 2000.

Manuel II Paléologue, *Oneirocriticon*. Éd. A. Delatte, *Anecdota Atheniensia*, 1 vol. Liège and Paris 1927, 511–24.

Miracles de Georges. Éd. J. Aufhauser, *Miracula S. Georgii*. Leipzig 1913.

Patria. Éd. T. Preger, *Scriptores originum Constantinopolitarum*, 2 vols, Leipzig 1907.

Procope de Gaza, *Discours*. Éd. E. Amato et alii – tr. P. Maréchaux, *Procope de Gaza, Discours et fragments*. Paris 2014.

Psellos, Michel, Éloge de Syméon le Metaphraste. Éd. E. Fisher, *Michaelis Pselli orationes hagiographicae*. Leipzig 1994, 267–88 .

——— Éloge de la puce. Éd. A. Littlewood, *Michaelis Pselli Oratoria minora*. Leipzig 1985, 102–6.

Ps-Syméon, *Histoire*. Éd. I. Bekker, *Theophanes Continuatus*. Bonn 1838, 603–760.

Syméon Logothète, *Histoire*. Ed. S. Wahlgren, *Symeonis magistri et logothetae chronicon*. CFHB 44/1, Berlin and New York 2006.

Théophane, *Histoire*. Éd. C. de Boor, *Theophanis Chronographia*. Leipzig 1883.

Théophane, *Continué*. Éd. M. Featherstone and J. Signes Codonez, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur libri I-IV*. CFHB 53, Boston and Berlin 2015.

Théophylacte d'Achrida, *Martyrs de Tibérioupolis*. Éd. P. Vlachakos, *Θεοφύλακτος Αχρίδος, Οι δεκαπέντε μάρτυρες της Τιβεριούπολης*. Thessalonike 2008.

Vie et Miracles de Nicolas. Éd. G. Anrich, *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche, I: Die Texte*. Leipzig and Berlin 1913.

Vie de Dosithée. Éd. L. Regnault and J. de Préville, *Dorothée de Gaza, Œuvres spirituelles*, SC 92. Paris 2001.

Vie de Basile. Éd. I. Ševčenko, *Chronographiae quae Theophanis Continuati nomine fertur liber quo Vita Basilii imperatoris amplectitur*. CFHB 42, Berlin and New York 2011.

Vie d'Euthyme. Éd. P. Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii patriarchae CP*, Bruxelles 1970.

Vie d'Irène de Chrysobalanton. Éd. J. O. Rosenqvist, *The Life of St Irene Abbess of Chrysobalanton*. SBU 1, Uppsala 1986.

Vie d'Ignace. Éd. A. Smithies, *Nicetas David, The Life of Patriarch Ignatius*. CFHB 51 = DOT 13, Washington, DC 2013.

Vie de l'impératrice Théodora. Éd. A. Markopoulos, « Βίος της αυτοκράτειρας Θεοδώρας (BHG 1731) » *Symmeikta* 5 (1983), 249–85.

Sources secondaires

Alexander, P. 1940. « Secular biography at Byzantium » *Speculum* 15, 194–209.

Agapitos, P. 1989. « Η εικόνα του αυτοκράτορα Βασίλειου Α΄ στη φιλομακεδονική γραμματεία 867–959 » Ελληνικά 40, 285–322.

Aigle D. and F. Briquel Chattonet (éd.) 2015, *Figures de Moise*. Paris.

Anagnostakis, I. 1989. « Το επεισόδιο της Δανιηλίδας (πληροφορίες καθημερινού βίου ή μυθοπλαστικά στοιχεία;) », dans Angelidi (éd.) 1989, 375–90.

Anagnostakis, I. 1999. « Οὐκ εἴσιν ἐμὰ τὰ γράμματα. Ιστορία και ιστορίες στον Πορφυρογέννητο » *Symmeikta* 13, 97–139.

Anagnostakis, I. 2008. « Η σολομώντεια αμφιθυμία των πρώτων Μακεδόνων αυτοκρατόρων και οι αποκαλυπτικές καταβολές της », dans Lambropoulou and Tsiknakis (éd.) 2008, 39–60.

Anagnostakis, I., T. Kolias, and E. Papadopoulou (éd.) 2011. *Animals and Environment in Byzantium (7th-12th c.)*. Athènes.

Anagnostakis, I. and T. Papamastorakis. 2011. «St. Romanos epi tēn sklepan. A Saint Protector and Healer of Horses », dans Anagnostakis, Kolias and Papadopoulou (éd.) 2011, 137–164.

Angelidi, Ch. (éd.) 1989. *Η καθημερινή ζωή στο Βυζάντιο. Τομές και συνέχειες στην ελληνιστική και ρωμαϊκή παράδοση*. Athènes.

Angelov, D. 2007. *Imperial Ideology and Political Thought in Byzantium, 1204–1330*. Cambridge.

Angelov, D. 2009. « Emperors and patriarchs as ideal children and adolescents: literary conventions and cultural expectations », dans Papaconstantinou and Talbot (éd.) 2009, 85–125.

Angelov, D. 2013. « Power and subversion in Byzantium: approaches and frameworks », in Angelov and Saxby (éd.) 2013, 1–18.

Angelov D. and M. Saxby (éd.) 2013. *Power and Subversion in Byzantium*. SPBS 17, Farnham, Surrey.

Anrich, G. 1917. *Hagios Nikolaos. Der heilige Nikolaos in der griechischen Kirche, II: Prolegomena, Untersuchungen, Indices*. Leipzig and Berlin.

Bernard, F. 2014. « The ethics of authorship: some tensions in the 11th century », dans Pizzone (éd.) 2014, 41–60.

Brubaker, L. (éd.) 1998. *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?*. SPBS 5, Aldershot, Hants.

Brubaker, L. and J. Smith (éd.) 2004. *Gender in the Early Medieval World, East and West, 300–900*. Cambridge.

Cavallo, G. 2012. « Alla ricerca del doppio pubblico di Michele P sello », in Odorico (éd.) 2012, 237–45.

Dagron, G. 1984. *Constantinople imaginaire. Études sur le recueil des « Patria »*. Paris.

Dagron, G. 1996. *Empereur et prêtre. Étude sur le « césaropapisme » byzantin*. Paris.

Delouis, O. 2003. « Topos et Typos, ou les dessous vétérotestamentaires de la rhétorique hagiographique à Byzance aux VIIIe et IXe siècles » *Hypothèses* 2003/1, 235–48.

Déroche, V. 2015. « Moïse à Byzance », dans Aigle and Briquel Chattonet (éd.) 2015, 201–17.

Dželebdžić, D. 2004. « Un aspect négligé de la symbolique de la pomme dans la littérature byzantine. À propos de la *Vita Basilii* (4, 14–20) » *ZRVI* 41, 123–32 (en serbe avec résumé français).

Esbroeck von, M. 2000. « La pomme de Théodose II et sa réplique arménienne », dans Sode and Takacs (éd.) 2000, 103–11.

Eco, U. 1985. *Lector in fabula*. Paris (édition italienne 1979).

Fonseca C., et al. (éd.) 2000, *Studi in onore di Giosuè Musca*. Bari.

Gallina, M. 2000. « Genere letterario e modelli classici. La Vita Basilii co me esempio di Kaizerbild », dans Fonseca et al. (éds) 2000, 189–99.

——— 2010. « La diffamazione del potere: l'invettiva contro Michele III nella *Vita Basilii* di Costantino VII » *Bullettino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il medio evo* 112, 57–89.

Genette, G. 2004^{3}. *Fiction et diction*. Paris.

Grotowski, P. 2003. « The Legend of St. George Saving a Youth from Captivity and its Depiction in Art » *Series Byzantina* 1 (Varsovie), 27–77.

James, L. (ed.) 1999. *Desire and Denial in Byzantium*. SPBS 6, Aldershot.

Jeffreys, E. 2010. « Old Testament 'history' and the Byzantine chronicle », dans Magdalino and Nelson (éd.) 2010, 153–74.

Jenkins, R. 1948. « Constantine VII's portrait of Michael III » *Académie Royale de Belgique. Bulletin de la Classe des Lettres et des Sciences morales et politiques*, ser. 5, 34, 71–77.

Jenkins, R. 1954. « The classical background of the Scriptores post Theophanem » *DOP* 8, 13–30.

Kampianaki, T. 2014. « Vita Basilii: the power of rhythm in constructing the narrative landscape of imperial propaganda », dans Lau, Franchi and di Rodi (éd.) 2014, 179–194.

Karagiannis-Moser, E. 1997. *Le bestiaire de la chanson populaire grecque moderne*. Paris.

Karlin-Hayter, P. 1991. « L'enjeu d'une rumeur. Opinion et imaginaire à Byzance au IXe s. » *JÖB* 41, 85–111.

Karpozilos, A. 2002. *Βυζαντινοί ιστορικοί και χρονογράφοι. Τόμος Β΄ (8ος-10ος αι.)*. Athènes 2002.

Katsaros, V. 2013. « Άγιος Γεώργιος ο γοργός. Η αλληγορική ερμηνεία στην εννοιολογική μετάλλαξη του επιθέτου » *ZRVI* 50, 505–19.

Kislinger, E. 1981. « Der junge Basileios I. und die Bulgaren » *JÖB* 30, 137–50.

——— 1983. « Eudokia Ingerina, Basileios I. und Michael III » *JÖB* 33, 119–36.

——— 1987. « Michael III. – Image und Realität » *Eos* 75, 389–400.

Koder, J. and I. Stouraitis (éd.) 2012. *Byzantine War Ideology between Roman Imperial Concept and Christian Religion*. Vienne.

Kolias, T. and K. Pitsakis (éd.) 2014. *Aureus. Volume dedicated to Professor Evangelos K. Chrysos*. Athènes.

Kolve, V. 1998. « Ganymede/Son of Getron: Medieval Monasticism and the Drama of Same-Sex Desire» *Speculum* 73, 1014–67.

Lambropoulou, A. and K. Tsiknakis (éd.) 2008. *Η εβραϊκή παρουσία στον ελλαδικό χώρο (4ος-19ος αι.)*. Athènes.

Lau, M., Franchi, C. and M. di Rodi (éd.) 2014. *Landscapes of Power. Selected Papers from the XV Oxford University Byzantine Society International Graduate Conference*. Bern.

Leontaritou, B. and E. Papagianni (éd.) 2013. *Αντικήνσωρ. Τιμητικός τόμος Σπύρου Ν. Τρωιάνου*. Athènes.

Littlewood, A. 1974. « The symbolism of the apple in Byzantine literature » *JÖB* 23, 33–59.

Ljubarskij, J. 1987. « Der Kaiser als Mime » *JÖB* 37, 39–50.

Macrides, R. (éd.) 2010, *History as Literature in Byzantium*. SPBS 15, Farnham, Surrey.

Magdalino, P. 2013, « Knowledge in authority and authorised history: the imperial intellectual programme of Leo VI and Constantine VII», dans Angelov and Saxby (éd.) 2013, 187–209.

Magdalino, P. and R. Nelson (éd.) 2010. *The Old Testament in Byzantium*. DOBSC, Washington, DC.

Markopoulos, A. 1998. « The rehabilitation of the emperor Theophilos », dans Brubaker (éd.) 1998, 37–49.

——— 2002. « Κύρου Παιδεία και Βίος Βασιλείου. Ένας πιθανός συσχετισμός » *Symmeikta* 15, 91–108.

——— 2009. « From narrative historiography to historical biography. New trends in Byzantine historiographical writing in the 10th-11th centuries » *BZ* 102, 697–715.

——— 2012. « The ideology of war in the military harangues of Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos», dans Koder and Stouraitis (éd.) 2012, 47–56.

——— 2013. « Οι μεταμορφώσεις της 'μυθολογίας' του Βασιλείου Α΄ », dans Leontaritou and Papagianni (éd.) 2013, 945–70.

——— 2014. « In search of the historical novel in Byzantine literature », dans Kolias and Pitsakis (éd.) 2014, 561–75.

——— 2015. « Le public des textes historiographiques à l'époque macédonienne » *Parekbolai* 5, 53–74.

Messis, Ch. 2006. « La mémoire du 'je' souffrant : construire et écrire la mémoire personnelle dans les récits de captivité », dans Odorico, Agapitos and Hinterberger (éd.) 2006, 107–46.

——— 2014. *Les eunuques à Byzance, entre réalité et imaginaire*. Paris.

Moravcik, G. 1961. « Sagen und Legenden über Kaiser Basileios I » *DOP* 15, 59–126.

Mullett, M. 2013. « How to criticize the laudandus », in Angelov and Saxby (éd.) 2013, 247–62.

Osgood, J. 2008. « Caesar and Nicomedes », *Classical Quarterly* 58, 687-.

Odorico, P. 1983. « La politica dell'immaginario di Leone VI il Saggio » *Byz* 53, 597–631.

——— 1987. « Il calamo d'argento. Un carme inedito in onore di Romano II » *JÖB* 37, 65–93.

Odorico, P., P. A. Agapitos & M. Hinterberger (éd.) 2006. *L'écriture de la mémoire. La littérarité de l'historiographie*. Paris.

——— (éd.) 2012, *La face cachée de la littérature byzantine. Le texte en tant que message immédiat*. Paris.

Papaconstantinou, A. and Talbot, A.-M. (éd.) 2009. *Children and Childhood in Byzantium*. Washington.

Papaioannou, S. 2010. « The aesthetics of history: from Theophanes to Eustathios », dans Macrides (éd.) 2010, 3–21.

Patlagean, E. 1992. « De la chasse et du souverain » *DOP* 46, 257–63.

Pérez-Martin, I. 2013. « The reception of Xenophon in Byzantium: the Macedonian period » *GRBS* 53, 812–55.

Pizzone, A. (éd.) 2014. *The Author in Middle Byzantine Literature. Modes, Functions and Identities*. Boston and Berlin.

Pomeroy, A. 1992, « Trimalchio as "Deliciae" » *Phoenix* 46, 45–53.

Rapp, C. 1998. « Comparison, paradigm and the case of Moses in panegyric and hagiography», dans Whitby (éd.) 1998, 277–98.

——— 2010. « Old Testament models for emperors in early Byzantium », dans Magdalino and Nelson (éd.) 2010, 175–97.

Romaios, K. 1968. « Τα άλογα των Ακριτών », dans K. Romaios, *Η ποίηση ενός λαού*. Athènes, 29–38.

Rydén, L, 1985. « The bride-shows at the Byzantine court – history or fiction? » *Eranos* 83, 175–91.

Scharf, R. 1990. « Die 'Apfel-Affäre' oder gab es einen Kaiser Arcadius II ? » *BZ* 83, 435–50.

Schnapp, A. 1997. *Le chasseur et la cité. Chasse et érotique dans la Grèce ancienne*. Paris.

Scott, R. 2010. « From propaganda to history to literature: the Byzantine stories of Theodosius'apple and Marcian's eagles », dans Macrides (éd.) 2010, 115–31.

Ševčenko, N. 1983. *The Life of Saint Nicholas in Byzantine Art*. Turin.

Sode, C. and S. Takacs (éd.) 2000. *Novum Millennium. Studies on Byzantine History and Culture Dedicated to Paul Speck*. Aldershot, Hants.

Tougher, S. 1997. *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912). Politics and People*. Leiden.

——— 1999. « Michael III and Basil the Macedonian: just good friends? » dans James (éd.) 1999, 149–58.

Treadgold, W. 1975. « The problem of the marriage of the emperor Theophilos » *GRBS* 16, 325–41.

——— 1979. « The bride-shows of the Byzantine emperors » *Byz* 49, 395–413.

Whitby, M. (éd.) 1998. *The Propaganda of Power: The Role of Panegyric in Late Antiquity*. Leiden.

Van Hoof, L. 2002. « Among Christian emperors. The *Vita Basilii* by Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus » *JECS* 54, 163–83.

Varona, P. 2009. « Contribucion al problema de la cronologia y las fuentes de la *Vita Basilii* » *BZ* 102, 739–75.

Varona Codeso, P. 2015. «In search of a Byzantine narrative canon: the Vita Basilii as an uncanonical work » *BMGS* 39, 173–90.

Vinson, M. 2000. « The Christianisation of sexual slander. Some preliminary observations », dans Sode and Takacs (éd.) 2000, 415–24.

Vinson, M. 2004. « Romance and reality in the Byzantine bride-shows », dans Brubaker and Smith (éds) 2004, 102–120.

12

CONSTRUCTING MEMORY: THE *CHRONICLE* OF THEOPHANES ON THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS

Anastasia Sirotenko

Theophanes' *Chronographia*, written in the early ninth century, covers more than half a millennium of Byzantine and early Christian history and is one of the most detailed Byzantine chronicles, highly esteemed both by the Byzantines and by most modern scholars.[1] Questions about Theophanes' editorial principles and working methods have attracted scholarly attention for years,[2] but – despite recent progress – are still in need of further investigation.[3] The aim of the present paper is to present an analysis of Theophanes' narrative and editorial techniques in the section of his chronicle devoted to the reign of the emperor Heraclius (610–641).

This section of the *Chronographia*, which has not been as well studied as other parts, contains valuable links and parallels with some earlier surviving sources from the seventh century: George of Pisidia and Theophylact Simocatta. Comparing Theophanes' narrative of the reign of Heraclius with the text of his sources sheds light on his editorial methods and helps identify the specific narrative mechanisms by means of which his narrative was constructed. In this chapter I shall survey the structure of Theophanes' account of Heraclius's reign and, by implication, the authorial intent behind it, as well as exploring the different narrative techniques which allowed the chronicler to create

[1] I do not intend in this present chapter to concentrate on the identity or biographical data of the author of the *Chronographia*, whether he is called "Theophanes the Confessor" (Kazhdan 1991, 2063, Karayannopulos & Weiss 1982, 338–39, Moravcsik 1983, 531–37), "the Second Theophanes" (Speck 1994, 431–88; cf. idem 1988, 499–520) or "Theophanes the Chronicler" (Zuckerman 2015, 31–52), since in any case the author must have lived in the same period of time (second half of the eighth to the beginning of the ninth centuries) and have had similar life experience and religious and political views.

[2] It has mostly been discussed on the basis of the sections of the *Chronographia* devoted to the sixth and eighth centuries, see Rochow 1991; Ljubarskij 1995, 305–16; Scott 2006, 49–65, and 1996, 20–34

[3] Scott 2006, 50.

his image of Heraclius, so making a 'true' and 'objective' history out of what we would consider to be his highly subjective and biased sources.

Although writing nearly two centuries after the age of Heraclius, Theophanes still produced a very influential account of the emperor that became canonical for the later tradition.[4] As with so much of Byzantine history writing, it is naturally 'very Byzantine', which, as Nilsson and Scott put it, makes it "very readable and not to be trusted".[5] That situation has led to a too ready acceptance of Theophanes' statements in places where there is a need to acknowledge that his version is far from being *authoritative*. One of the first to recognize this in modern scholarship was James Howard-Johnston although his approach has led him to deny Theophanes' authorship of a huge part of the *Chronographia*'s account of Heraclius and attribute it to George of Pisidia.[6] Of huge importance for the present article is the approach taken by Jenny Ferber, who emphasized the textual integrity of Theophanes' narrative of Heraclius and took his account of it as a "meaningfully categorized whole" and not as a "patchwork of sources".[7] She also argued that Theophanes' method was deeply ideologically biased – a suggestion that I am going to support entirely in this chapter. Ferber did not intend, however, to concentrate on Theophanes' text in detail, leaving that for the future scholars, but instead showed how Theophanes adapted his chronological presentation to associate Heraclius's early success with his initial piety while making his later failures follow and result from his support of heresy.

THE STRUCTURE OF THEOPHANES' ACCOUNT OF THE REIGN OF HERACLIUS

Theophanes showed particular interest in the reign of the emperor Heraclius, devoting to him a remarkably large portion of his work (43 pages in the de Boor edition) making him the second-most discussed emperor in the entire chronicle. Heraclius is surpassed only by Justinian (67 pp), leaving behind such significant emperors as Constantine I (36 pp), Constantine V (34 pp), Theodosius II (23 pp) and Leo III (23 pp). Admittedly Heraclius had a long reign (31 years), but shorter than that of Constantine I (32 years),

[4] The account of Heraclius's reign in most of the later chronicles, up to the early Modern Greek ones, is to a huge extent based on that of Theophanes, see George the Monk, *Chronicle* 667–673; George Kedrenos, *Synopsis* 681–727; John Zonaras, *Extracts* 203–16; Michael Glykas, *Chronicle* 511–13; Dorotheos of Monemvasia, *History* 271–80. Theophanes appears not to have had access to the *Chronicon Paschale* which covered Heraclius's reign from 610 to at least 628 and probably to 630, and was probably composed only shortly after 630. See Mango & Scott 1997, lxxx.

[5] Nilsson & Scott 2007, 326, commenting on Norwich 1988–1995.

[6] Howard-Johnston 1994, 57–87, 59; idem 2010, 285–95.

[7] Ferber 1981, 33.

Theodosius II (42 years), and Constantine V (35 years), and even for Justinian 30 of the 67 pages devoted to him are on a single event covered in a single year, the Vandal war at AM 6026 with a further five pages given to the Nika riot of the previous year (AM 6025). The remainder of Justinian's long reign consequently gets rather less attention (32 pages for 36 years) than does Heraclius. Clearly Heraclius was a major figure for Theophanes, to whom he has devoted a large if not disproportionate amount of space, making his reign one of considerable significance for the chronicle. Hence the need for an analysis of how and why the chronicler devoted so much attention to this emperor and his reign.

At first sight, Theophanes' account of the age of Heraclius seems to be structured chronologically, year by year, as most Byzantine chronicles are – or at least as their chroniclers proclaim to be doing.[8] In the case of Theophanes this is, however, at least misleading and arguably incorrect. A close reading of Theophanes' text demonstrates that the integral narrative blocks can be disrupted by multiple but separated references to events of a particular year. Theophanes' chronological framework therefore did not entirely correspond to his material, and appears to us as highly artificial. In fact, Theophanes' narrative on Heraclius is arranged not chronologically but thematically. It consists of four intrinsically connected narrative blocks:

- The accession of Heraclius to the throne (AM 6101–6104, deB pp. 297–300)
- The Byzantine-Persian war (AM 6105–6112, deB pp. 300–2) and Heraclius's Persian campaigns (AM 6113–6120, deB pp. 302–29)
- The heresy of monoenergism/monotheletism (AM 6121, deB pp. 329–32)
- The emergence of Islam, the early Islamic conquests and imperial defeats (AM 6122–6132, deB pp. 333–41)

The actual historical sequence of events does not wholly correspond to that scheme. For example, the religious policy of monoenergism in fact began during the Byzan-

[8] The chronological framework applied by Theophanes, as it is known in the modern scholarship, involves dating every event according to eight parallel systems: 1) *Anno Mundi* (Alexandrian era), 2) *Anno Incarnationis* 3) regnal year of the Byzantine emperor, 4) Persian king, the year since the enthronement of the patriarchs of 5) Constantinople, 6) Jerusalem, 7) Alexandria and 8) Antioch. Such a detailed chronological framework had never been used before Theophanes (Kuzenkov 2006, 160; Grumel 1958, 95–96). Recent scholarship on the manuscript tradition does, however, suggest that the scheme may not have been part of Theophanes' original text and may rather have been imposed on his text early in the tenth century, possibly through the agency of his relative, the empress Zoe. See Ronconi 2015, 121–48; for Zoe, Codoñer 2015; against this (in favour of the rubrics being original), Jankowiak 2015, 53–72.

tine-Persian war and not after it.[9] By treating it in a single year, separated from its proper context during Heraclius's successes against the Persians and placed instead immediately before his account of the rise of Islam, Theophanes gives it a quite different emphasis and historical significance. Likewise the emergence of Islam should also be dated earlier, to the 610s or 620s, and not to the 630s as Theophanes dates it. Theophanes is able to achieve this later dating by giving his account of the rise of Islam as a kind of minor adjunct to his notice of Muhammad's death in 632 which he gives accurately. But by this dating he again is able to provide a very different emphasis for the significance of the rise of Islam in Heraclius's career and reign. It follows immediately after his support for a major heresy. It is difficult not to accept that the placing of his accounts of Monoenergism and the rise of Islam is quite deliberate. Additionally, Theophanes' extensive narrative on Heraclius's Persian campaigns (25 pp for only 6 years, 622–627), despite its length, is not interrupted by any of those other significant events, that, as we know from other sources, occurred in the same period – not even by the dramatic siege of Thessalonike by the Avars and Slavs (617/618) or the Slavic attack on the Byzantine islands such as Crete (616 and 618), all of which Theophanes manages to omit entirely.[10] Moreover, Theophanes dedicated only a few lines to the siege of Constantinople (626) by the Avars and Slavs,[11] even though he must have known the accounts of it in such earlier sources as the two poems of George of Pisidia that were devoted to that event.[12]

This deliberate thematic arrangement of the material, which prevails over the chronological structure, subdues it and thereby provides a historically wrong sequence of events. By rearranging his material Theophanes has purposely created a new, ideologically correct history. The early ninth century, when Theophanes lived and worked on his *Chronographia*, was still a period of continuous struggle between the iconoclasts and the iconodules, who had at last gained imperial support. Theophanes remained an influential opponent of the state iconoclastic policy throughout his life, and his beliefs and ideas about orthodoxy had a great impact on his work. In my reading, the four-part structure of Heraclius's reign was designed in order to serve as an illustration of divine reward for piety and divine punishment for heresy from the iconodule point of view. That is why the pious emperor, overthrowing the tyrant Phocas with divine assis-

[9] Owsepian 1897, 37; Frend 1972, 345.

[10] *Miracula sancti Demetrii* 130–167 Lemerle; *Chronicon miscellaneum* 113 Chabot.

[11] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 316.16–25. See also Mango & Scott 1997, 447.

[12] George of Pisidia, *Bellum avaricum*, Pertusi; George of Pisidia, *In Bonum patricium*, Pertusi. Theophanes knew and cited many other poems of George of Pisidia; the *Bellum avaricum* was well-known in Byzantium also after the so-called Dark Ages: it is mentioned in the tenth-century Suda γ 170 and thus it must have been available to Theophanes.

tance, praying before every battle, often holding icons and holy scriptures in his hands, destroying the sanctuaries of the infidels, deserves victory over the Persians as a reward for his Christian piety. But that is also why the same Heraclius, falling into the heresy of Monotheletism, incurs divine wrath on himself and his empire, which manifests itself in the defeats suffered against the Arabs.

Heraclius's reign, in Theophanes' eyes, breaks up into two opposing parts: the period of piety, which is crowned by military victory, and the period of heresy, which ends in military defeat. That is why the image of Heraclius is so ambivalent and not integrated: the Heraclius who committed a sin and the Heraclius who was a pious emperor were for Theophanes two different persons.

LEGITIMIZING THE POWER: HERACLIUS AND THE ICONS

Heraclius, son of Heraclius, exarch of Africa (c. 600–610), came to the imperial power by means of a revolt. Coming to Constantinople from Africa with his fleet, he overthrew the emperor Phocas, who was considered by part of the population to be a tyrant. After the cruel assassination of Phocas,[13] Heraclius was crowned emperor in Hagia Sophia. Such a violent accession to the throne definitely needed some legitimizing. Theophanes presented the chief of the rebels in the following manner:

> Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει μηνὶ Ὀκτωβρίῳ δʹ, ἡμέρᾳ βʹ, ἰνδικτιῶνος ιδʹ, ἧκεν Ἡράκλειος ἀπὸ Ἀφρικῆς φέρων πλοῖα καστελλωμένα, ἔχοντα ἐν τοῖς καταρτίοις κιβώτια καὶ εἰκόνας τῆς θεομήτορος, καθὰ καὶ ὁ Πισίδιος Γεώργιος λέγει, καὶ στρατὸν πολὺν ἀπὸ Ἀφρικῆς καὶ Μαυριτανίας.[14]

> In this year, on 4 October, a Monday, indiction 14 [610], Heraclius arrived from Africa bringing fortified ships that had on their masts reliquaries and icons of the Mother of God (as George the Pisidian relates), as well as a numerous army from Africa and Mauritania.

The panegyric poem of George of Pisidia, which Theophanes used as his source, offers a much more solemn and metaphorical account of Heraclius's departure from Africa:

> **ἤδη μὲν** οὖν ἔσβεστο τῆς τυραννίδος
> τὸ πῦρ ὁ Φωκᾶς [...]
> τῆς γῆς τὸ κῆτος, τὸ πρόσωπον Γοργόνος,
> οὐχ εἷλες αὐτόν, ὡς ὁ Περσέως πλάνος,
> ἀλλ' ἀντιτάξας τῷ φθορεῖ τῶν παρθένων
> τὸ φρικτὸν εἶδος τῆς ἀχράντου Παρθένου
> αὐτῆς γὰρ εἶχες τὴν βοηθὸν εἰκόνα
> ὅτε προσῆλθες τῇ βορᾷ τοῦ θηρίου.[15]

[13] *Chronicon paschale* 700.18–701.8 Dindorf.

[14] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 298.25–29; tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 427.

[15] George of Pisidia, *Heraclias* 2.5–6, 11–16 Pertusi. All translations from George of Pisidia are by the author.

> The flame of tyranny, Phocas, has already been quenched [...]
> The monster on earth, the image of Gorgon,
> You [Heraclius] have not killed him, as Perseus-cheater,
> But you have opposed to the corrupter of virgins
> The image of the immaculate Virgin, which made him shudder,[16]
> For you had a supporting icon of Her,
> When you approached the greedy mouth of the beast.[17]

Unlike Theophanes, Pisides used elaborate metaphorical allusions (both classical and Christian) to describe the actors of his narrative and the scene – the revolt of Heraclius and the subsequent *coup d'état*. Heraclius, who overthrew the "tyrant" Phocas, "the image of the Gorgon", is compared with Perseus, who defeated and killed the Gorgon, and is even preferred to the ancient hero because of his honesty and Christian piety ("You have not killed him, as Perseus-cheater" etc).[18] The opponent of Heraclius, the emperor Phocas, is being denigrated by all possible linguistic means. For Pisides he is "tyrant" from a legal perspective, "monster on earth" and "corrupter of virgins" from a moral/ethical one, "image of the Gorgon" in terms of classical heritage and impious heretic from an orthodox viewpoint. By accusing Phocas of not revering icons (the image of the Virgin was φρικτὸν for him, i.e. made him shudder) Pisides extracted him from the Christian *oikoumene* where only the civil and religious laws functioned. Impious heretic, not having anyone or anything to rely upon, Phocas is therefore helpless before Heraclius, who had divine help for his enterprise and held a holy icon in his hands as a weapon.

By contrast Theophanes presented a more rational and realistic view on the enterprise of Heraclius. He indicated briefly the time and location of the event (4 October 610, arriving in Constantinople "from Africa"), mentioned the "fortified ships" of Heraclius bringing "a numerous army". The chronicler stood up for Heraclius, representing him surrounded by the holy icons (in plural, in contrast to Pisides: εἰκόνας τῆς θεομήτορος), but he obviously did not mean to say (as Pisides did) that immaterial power was Heraclius's only weapon.

16 To be noted is the role of the Virgin as protector of the City, who bestows victory and supreme power in Constantinople on the one who deserves it. See Speck 2003, 266–71 and Averintsev 1972, 25–49, whose analysis has demonstrated that the Holy Virgin can in some Byzantine texts even personify the Christian capital.

17 The last line is not very clear. In our translation we follow the choice of an Italian editor, L. Tartaglia, who understood under βορά (literally "food") "the greedy mouth" (*bocca vorace*) of the "beast", Phocas. See *Carmi di Giorgio di Pisidia* 211 Tartaglia.

18 Concerning the parallel between Heraclius and Perseus see Whitby 1994, 209.

The depiction of Heraclius surrounded by holy icons and/or consulting the Holy Scripture is one of the techniques most frequently used by Theophanes to legitimize Heraclius's possession of imperial power,[19] possibly stemming from the chronicler's own iconodule position and view of history.

PROBLEMS OF NARRATING: HOW TO DEAL WITH CHRISTIAN DEFEATS

The history of the first years (610–622) of Heraclius's reign, as we know it from various sources, was sorrowful for the empire. Byzantium had lost to the Persians most of its eastern territories: Syria and Palestine with Jerusalem (614), Egypt and most of Asia Minor (619). Furthermore, most of the Balkans were occupied by the Avars and Slavs. Heraclius could not change the situation. The problem that Theophanes was facing is quite obvious: the utterly pious emperor and his empire adhering to the true faith, instead of being awarded victories over the infidels, suffered continuous defeats. Theophanes' solution was rather one of avoidance and omission. The Persian successes are described according to the standard scheme: "In this year the Persians took..." (Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει παρέλαβον οἱ Πέρσαι...) + object(s) specifying the occupied area(s).[20] Theophanes did not offer any information about the movements of the imperial forces; neither did he provide explanations or suggestions regarding the reasons for the tremendous success of the Persians.[21] Only one action of Heraclius is mentioned: sending peace delegations to the Persians and the Avars, an act that later turned out to be unsuccessful, but by its inclusion in the narrative here in AM 6109 (AD 616/617) and AM 6111 (AD 618/619) gave Theophanes a rare chance to show Heraclius doing something positive at this early stage.[22]

To minimize Heraclius's obvious faults in organizing the imperial defence, Theophanes used the following technique. When describing the troubles of the empire, under the entry AM 6103 (AD 610/611), Theophanes retold the passage found in the *History* of Theophylact Simocatta, the seventh-century court historian:

> ἐρευνήσας γὰρ τὸν στρατόν, εἰ ἄρα ἐσώζοντο ἐκ τῶν μετὰ Φωκᾶ κατὰ Μαυρικίου στρατευσάντων ἐπὶ τῆς τούτου τυραννίδος, δύο μόνους εὗρεν ἐν πᾶσι τοῖς θέμασιν. [23]

[19] See also the following examples: Theophanes, Chronographia 303.17–21 (tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 436); 308.14–16 (tr. 440).

[20] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 299–302.

[21] By comparison, he did it quite clearly when narrating the Arabic conquests, to which I shall return below.

[22] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 301.21–24, 302.15–23.

[23] Theophanes, Chronographia 300.4–6. My translation here varies a bit from that by Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, see tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 429.

> He [Heraclius] made a census of the army to find out if there were any survivors from among those who had revolted with Phocas against Maurice and found only two in the whole army.

The importance of this passage for Theophanes is shown through his citing of it twice, first at the end of Maurice's final year and again here in the earlier part of his account of Heraclius with the time indication "when Heraclius began to reign" (ὁπηνίκα Ἡράκλειος ἐβασίλευσε).[24] Theophylact Simocatta, however, in the original passage, placed this in a quite different context at a different time: "when the emperor Heraclius set off against Rhazatas (ὁπηνίκα πρὸς τὸν Ῥαζάτην τὸν πόλεμον ἐποιήσατο ὁ αὐτοκράτωρ Ἡράκλειος).[25] That is an event that happened much later, most probably in 626–27.[26] The original idea of Theophylact Simocatta was to show that, *as time went by*, the whole perfidious army that supported Phocas and betrayed the legitimate emperor Maurice perished (although it would indeed have been unusual for any soldier under Maurice to have still been serving a quarter of a century later). But Theophanes deliberately changed the time and thereby introduced a completely new idea into the old text: *immediately* after his accession to the throne, Heraclius could not find any experienced soldiers in his army, i.e. the military situation was so worsened by his predecessor (the tyrant Phocas) that Heraclius did not know what to do. It appears that Theophanes apparently wanted to demonstrate that Heraclius's predecessor was far more responsible for the defeats suffered in the first years of his reign than was Heraclius.

Accordingly, explaining the defeats of the true Christian empire appears to have been such an unsolvable task for Theophanes that he preferred rather to be silent and indifferently enumerate the lost cities. Still, he did his best to refrain from reproaching the pious Heraclius and tried to put the major part of the responsibility for the losses on Heraclius's predecessor on the imperial throne.

CONSTRUCTING THE MEMORY OF THE VICTORIOUS WAR

Theophanes' account of the Persian campaigns of Heraclius covers more than half of the entire narrative dedicated to his reign (25 out of 43 pages in the de Boor edition). Theophanes' version is the only detailed account that we have of the whole Byzantine offensive in that war. We cannot verify many dates that Theophanes provides, nor the sequence of the events; nevertheless most modern histories of this part of the Byzantine-Persian war rely completely on Theophanes.[27]

24 Theophanes, *Chronographia* 290.16–19

25 Theophylact Simocatta, *Histories* 339.24–340.4.

26 Stratos 1968, 208–10.

27 Kaegi 2003, 100–91; Stratos 1968, 135–237; Haldon 1997, 44–48.

The only other author that we have at our disposal and whose work Theophanes broadly used in the relevant part of his chronicle, is the already mentioned seventh-century court poet George of Pisidia.[28] He was a contemporary of the emperor Heraclius and served as deacon and *skeuophylax* in Hagia Sophia in Constantinople.[29] He wrote two panegyric poems dedicated solely to Heraclius's Persian campaigns *(Expeditio persica, Heraclias*), one poem devoted to the victorious end of the Persian war and the restoration of the Cross in Jerusalem (*In restitutionem Crucis*) and two poems devoted to the defence of Constantinople against the Avars and Slavs (*Bellum avaricum, In Bonum patricium*). As noted above, the poems of Pisides were widely known among Byzantine intellectuals of the ninth and tenth centuries.[30] The account of the war in Theophanes consists of three integral parts, which – according to Theophanes' division – correspond to three military campaigns of Heraclius: the first campaign (AM 6113/622–3 CE), the second (AM 6114–6116/623–625 CE) and the third (the Byzantine invasion of Mesopotamia, AM 6118/627–628 CE), the latter two separated by a short intermezzo about the events in Georgia and the siege of Constantinople (AM 6117/626 CE).

I shall address first the question of what Theophanes consciously ignored while constructing the memory of the victorious war. The most prominent failure of imperial policy during the war was not merely letting the Persians occupy half of the empire in the 610s, but also letting a joint force of Avars and Slavs, supported by the Persians, take the whole of the Balkans and, as a result, attack (though unsuccessfully) Constantinople and Thessalonike. Theophanes must have known such seventh-century sources narrating these dramatic events as *Bellum avaricum* and *In Bonum patricium* by Pisides. Still, he depicts the siege of Constantinople very briefly.[31]

Second, let us turn to Theophanes' methods. The most prominent technique that he uses in Theophanes' chronographic narrative is to condense Pisides' long, linguistically rich, but often not very clear panegyric verses in order to extract from them the necessary historical and ideological matter. The process can be described as similar to the process of the production of juice, when the raw material of fruit becomes juice under a press. Let us consider the following example, by first looking at the way in which George of Pisidia represented Heraclius's setting off against Persia in 622:

[28] Theophanes appears not to have had access to *Chronicon paschale* which covered Heraclius's reign from 610 to at least 628 and probably to 630, and was probably composed only shortly after 630. See Mango & Scott, lxxx.

[29] Kazhdan 1991, 838.

[30] Suidae lexicon No. γ 170 Adler.

[31] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 316.16–25. "This account of the siege of Constantinople is remarkably short", Mango & Scott 1997, 448 with bibliography for the events.

ἑορτάσας δὲ τὴν μεγίστην ἡμέραν
ἐν ᾗ τὸ κοινὸν ἐξανέστη τοῦ γένους
εἰς ἔνθεόν τε καὶ νέαν ἀνάπλασιν,
εὐθὺς μετ’ αὐτὴν εἰκονίζων Μωσέα
καταστρατηγεῖς <τοῦ> Φαραὼ τοῦ δευτέρου,
εἰ δεύτερόν τις οὐχ ἁμαρτήσοι λέγων
τὸν ὡς ἀληθῶς πρῶτον εἰς ἁμαρτίαν.[32]

Having celebrated the great day
When the whole [human] race resurrected
Into the divine and new form,
And straight away, on the following day, you [Heraclius], in the image of Moses,
Take up arms against the second Pharaoh,
If it is not a mistake to call “second”
The one who is truly the first in sin.

Pisides, who was at that time in Constantinople, serving in Hagia Sophia as deacon, would have witnessed Heraclius’s departure to the East, and might very likely have taken part in the Divine Liturgy on Easter 622, which the emperor attended before setting out. These verses are therefore interesting also as those of an eyewitness. In Theophanes’ chronicle the verses of Pisides were reused in the following condensed manner: “In this year, on 4 April, indiction 10, the emperor Heraclius, after celebrating the Easter feast, straightaway set out against Persia on Monday evening” (Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει μηνὶ Ἀπριλλίῳ δʹ, ἰνδικτιῶνος ιʹ, τελέσας ὁ βασιλεὺς Ἡράκλειος τὴν ἑορτὴν τοῦ πάσχα εὐθέως τῇ δευτέρᾳ ἑσπέρας ἐκίνησε κατὰ Περσίδος).[33]

It is not, however, the rich metaphorical system of Pisides (e.g. the parallel between Moses and Pharaoh) that is significant for Theophanes – he simply omits it. Rather, there are two crucial moments that are important for him: the ‘historical fact’ (the setting off against Persia) and the ideological implications that surround it. Theophanes did not drop Pisides’ mention of Easter: it *is* important for the chronicler that Heraclius began his expedition exactly at that time, because this episode shows him as a pious emperor. Heraclius is never mentioned in relation to Christian feasts after he fell into heresy (from Theophanes’ perspective), but in the ‘pious’ part of his reign Heraclius appears several times in a religious context. Theophanes created that setting with the single aim of legitimizing Heraclius’s power and lending a holy character to his war against the Persians. The omission of Pisides’ metaphorical allusions was due not only to Theophanes’ lack of a deep classical and biblical background (in contrast to Pisides himself), but also because these skilfully elaborated comparisons were not necessary for the type of narrative that he was creating. It could also be seen in relation to the

[32] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 1, 132–38 Pertusi.
[33] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 302.31–33; tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 435.

horizon of expectation of his readership, who may not have been able to understand the complicated language used by Pisides.[34]

Another method frequently used by Theophanes is more complex. It includes rewriting verbatim some of Pisides' verses, integrating other chunks of Pisides' text into his final text with some lexical or grammatical changes, but still remaining quite close to the original, and composing some missing elements by himself. A very special rhythm marks the fragments of Theophanes' chronicle made up using this narrative technique. The examples of this narrative strategy can be categorized by several types, all of them having (what we from a modern point of view would call) solely ideological aims. Worthy of mention are the numerous alleged speeches of Heraclius to his forces;[35] the episodes showing Heraclius holding an icon;[36] Heraclius with the Gospel;[37] Heraclius praying in a church;[38] Heraclius sparing the Persian prisoners and letting them go.[39] This method can be clearly illustrated by the example of one of Heraclius's supposed speeches. In Pisides' representation, the speech covers several lines, including the following:

> πρέπει γὰρ ἡμᾶς, ὡς ἐκείνου πλάσματα,
> χωρεῖν κατ' ἐχθρῶν προσκυνούντων κτίσματα,
> οἳ τὰς τραπέζας τὰς ἀμίκτους αἱμάτων
> λύθροις ἔμιξαν αἱμάτων μιαιφόνοις·
> οἳ τὰς ἀδέκτους τῶν παθῶν ἐκκλησίας
> ἐν ἡδοναῖς χραίνουσιν ἐμπαθεστάταις.[40]
>
> We as His creations must
> Stand up against the enemies who worship created things,
> Who have mixed with the shed blood of murder
> The chaste altars of blood [of sacrifice – A.S.];
> How they defile with the impassioned pleasures our churches,
> Which do not admit of the passions.

In Theophanes' portrayal of the same episode, the whole speech covers only a few lines.

[34] cf. Scott 2015, 241–45.
[35] Ibid., 303.29–304.3 (tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 436, cf. George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 2, 105–115 Pertusi); 307.3–13 (tr. 439, cf. George of Pisidia, *Heraclias* 3, frag. 3 Pertusi); 310.26–311.2 (tr. 442–443, cf. George of Pisidia, *Heraclias* 3, frag. 6 Pertusi)
[36] Ibid., 298.25–29 (tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 427); 303.17–21 (tr. 436).
[37] Ibid., 308.14–17 (tr. 440)
[38] In Theophanes only scarcely, for a more extended version see George Kedrenos, *Synopsis* 718.23–719.3.
[39] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 308.20–25 (tr. 440)
[40] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 2, 105–10 Pertusi.

> ὁρᾶτε, ἀδελφοὶ καὶ τέκνα, ὡς οἱ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ θεοῦ κατεπάτησαν ἡμῶν τὴν χώραν καὶ τὰς πόλεις ἠρήμωσαν καὶ τὰ θυσιαστήρια κατέκαυσαν καὶ τὰς τραπέζας τῶν ἀναιμάκτων θυσιῶν αἱμάτων μιαιφόνων ἐπλήρωσαν, καὶ τὰς ἀδέκτους τῶν παθῶν ἐκκλησίας ἐν ἡδοναῖς χραίνουσιν ἐμπαθεστάταις.[41]
>
> You see, O my brethren and children, how the enemies of God have trampled upon our land, have laid our cities waste, have burnt our sanctuaries and have filled with the shed blood of murder the altars of bloodless sacrifice, and how they defile with the impassioned pleasures our churches, which do not admit of the passions.

The episode takes place, in the versions of both Pisides and Theophanes, at the beginning of the first campaign of Heraclius against Persia, most probably in May/June 622 in Nikomedeia or Pontos. Pisides must have been at that time in Constantinople, so he could not have heard Heraclius's speech. If it was actually spoken, he could have reconstructed it on the basis of the written record probably given to him by Heraclius on his return to Constantinople.[42]

The textual fragment identical in Pisides and Theophanes has been underlined with a straight line ([οἳ] τὰς ἀδέκτους τῶν παθῶν ἐκκλησίας ἐν ἡδοναῖς χραίνουσιν ἐμπαθεστάταις – "how (they) defile with the impassioned pleasures our churches, which do not admit of the passions"). Pisides (or his source) was careful in choosing words: the blasphemous act of the Persians is described with the word ἡδονή, which since ancient times meant above all physical pleasure, incompatible with any kind of religious service. This rewriting of the panegyric verses would have contributed to the dramatization of Theophanes' narrative.

The textual fragment which is very similar in both texts has been underlined with a dotted line and takes the middle part of both cited fragments. The idea of the narrator is, as also in the previous example, that the Persians desecrated the sacred Christian sites: in these lines, they have poured the "blood of murder" (i.e. of the killed Christians) on the holy altars. The vocabulary of Pisides' and Theophanes' fragments is very similar; most of the nouns and adjectives are the same, but in different grammatical cases, and Theophanes used another verb, more appropriate from my point of view (ἐπλήρωσαν instead of ἔμιξαν), which made the whole sentence clearer.

Another interesting issue is the rhythm of Heraclius's alleged speech in Theophanes' version. The chronographer preserved the original metre of Pisides (iambic trimeter) in the part that he rewrote verbatim from his source (from τὰς ἀδέκτους to ἐμπαθεστάταις), but a very special rhythm is created also in the rest of his account. Theophanes used *parallelism* in the part of Heraclius's alleged speech that he apparently composed by himself: he established similar patterns of grammatical structure by repeating the

[41] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 303.29–304.3; tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 436.

[42] Howard-Johnston 2010, 20.

simple combination of verb and direct object three times (one time the verb stands before the direct object, but twice the structure remains identical: first direct object, that verb). The homogeneous structures are separated with the conjunction καὶ:

1 x 2 x
ὡς οἱ ἐχθροὶ τοῦ θεοῦ [κατεπάτησαν ἡμῶν τὴν χώραν] **καὶ** [τὰς πόλεις ἠρήμωσαν] **καὶ**
3 x
[τὰ θυσιαστήρια κατέκαυσαν]

This parallelism applied by Theophanes, with its gradual intensification of the rhythm, served perfectly for producing dramatic effect, which would appear to have been the author's main purpose.

Another method that Theophanes adopts for making use of Pisides' panegyric material is to add some important items of historical information (borrowed from some lost sources) to Pisides' account and/or to omit some narrative elements that did not fit closely with Theophanes' concept of the victorious war. For example, Pisides' long episode on the capture and escape of an Arab leader does not include the important information that the Arab tribes were at that time tributaries of the Persians, which influenced the course of the campaign.[43] That fact, together with Pisides' difficult style and endless digressions, makes the whole episode unclear. Theophanes retold the same episode in just five lines but added the missing item about the tributary status of the Arab tribes.[44] What is even more interesting is that Theophanes did not mention the fact that the captive escaped in the end,[45] which brought new dangers to the Byzantine army! Instead of that, he turned to describing Heraclius's other successful campaigns. Changing the story in this way obviously served Theophanes' purpose of making the emperor appear even more invincible than he is in Pisides' panegyric verses.

A final example of Theophanes' narrative methods is his changing of significant elements of Pisides' text, for example the grammatical subject. In his narration of Heraclius's first expedition against Persia (622), Pisides wrote that "In winter, when the barbarian was spending some time in the region of Pontos, he managed to take the passes to the road" (ἐπεὶ γὰρ εἰς χειμῶνα πρὸς τὸ Πόντιον / κλίμα διατρίψας συντόμως ὁ βάρβαρος / τὰς εἰσβολὰς κατέσχε τῆς ὁδοῦ φθάσας).[46] Theophanes reused that passage

[43] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 2, 217–35 Pertusi.
[44] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 304.13–18; tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 436.
[45] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 2, 232–34.
[46] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 2, 256–58 Pertusi.

with considerable changes: "Since winter set in, and the emperor turned to the region of Pontos, the barbarians decided to besiege him in his winter quarters."[47]

The subject who winters in the region of Pontos is accordingly the "barbarian" (i.e. the Persian general with his army) in Pisides' text, but the emperor Heraclius in Theophanes'. Pisides' representation is followed by a long and quite vague description of the manœuvres and skirmishes between the Byzantine and Persian armies in some non-indicated region in the East.[48] Theophanes' version is followed by a brief and simple indication of Heraclius's invasion of Persia (which is also to be found in Pisides, but later).[49] If it was the emperor and not the barbarian who wintered in Pontos, it is quite logical that he would next have invaded nearby Persia through the mountain passes. Therefore, by changing the subject and the sequence of events Theophanes aimed at simplifying the account and rendering a more logical order to his narration. More logical order in this case means, however, less historical trustworthiness, since the course of the military operation in Pontos and of the following campaign in Persia is distorted by Theophanes because of his changes.

Moreover, the narrative technique of omitting the information which Pisides provided (manœuvres and skirmishes of 622, which were often not successful for the Byzantines)[50] allowed Theophanes to conceal the failures of the empire and create an image of Heraclius's 622 campaign as an entirely and wholly victorious one. Such narrative characteristics as the acting subject and the logical (and ideologically correct) sequence of events seem therefore to have been more important for Theophanes than accuracy in citing his sources or even historical verisimilitude.

CONSTRUCTING THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF HERACLIUS: THE HERESY AND THE ARABS

The section of Theophanes' chronicle depicting the entire 'impious' part of Heraclius's reign covers twelve pages in de Boor's edition (in comparison, the account of only one expedition of Heraclius against the Persians, AM 6118, covers eleven pages). Theophanes' sources for that period are unknown: there are only some parallels between Theophanes and a few later medieval Syriac chronicles, such as Michael the Syrian, Elias

[47] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 304.18–20: ἐπεὶ δὲ χειμὼν κατέλαβεν, ἀποκλίνας ὁ βασιλεὺς πρὸς τὸ Πόντιον κλίμα, ἔδοξε τοῖς βαρβάροις ἐν τούτῳ αὐτὸν παραχειμάζοντα [πολιορκεῖν]; tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 436.

[48] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 2, 259–345 Pertusi.

[49] George of Pisidia, *Expeditio persica* 2, 345 ff.

[50] As we can assume on the basis of the critical analysis of Pisides' verses (*Expeditio persica* II 259–345).

of Nisibis, the anonymous chronicle of the year 1234, and the chronicle of Seert,[51] but unfortunately we do not possess any significant historical text earlier than the ninth century from which Theophanes directly borrowed his information. Still, based on the methods examined above that Theophanes used while composing the earlier parts of his account of Heraclius, we can assume that he was also capable of structuring a quite independent account in this part to impose on it its own ideological coherence and meaning.

What we nowadays call monotheletism (i.e. 'the doctrine of one will') and, its earlier phase, monoenergism (i.e. 'the doctrine of one energy') was initially a compromise religious policy made up by the patriarch Sergios of Constantinople (610–638) and the emperor Heraclius in order to unite in one imperial church the two most prominent religious groups within the empire – the orthodox and the miaphysites. It began in ca. 615 and was already quite developed by the end of the Byzantine-Persian war.[52] Theophanes though begins the whole story after the war, in AM 6121 (629/630 CE), with the following words:

> Τούτῳ τῷ ἔτει τοῦ βασιλέως Ἡρακλείου ὄντος ἐν Ἱεραπόλει, ἦλθε πρὸς αὐτὸν Ἀθανάσιος ὁ πατριάρχης τῶν Ἰακωβιτῶν δεινὸς ἀνὴρ καὶ κακοῦργος τῇ τῶν Σύρων ἐμφύτῳ πανουργίᾳ, καὶ κινήσας πρὸς τὸν βασιλέα περὶ πίστεως λόγους.[53]

> In this year, when the emperor Heraclius was at Hierapolis, Athanasios, Patriarch of the Jacobites, came to him. This skilful and wicked man, who was filled with the cunning that is native to Syrians, began with the emperor a discussion about the faith.

Monotheletism and monoenergism were condemned as heretical doctrines at the Sixth Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 681. It is not surprising therefore that Theophanes took up this intolerant and chauvinistic tone while describing the origins of what he regarded as impious heresy. In his view, it was the influence that Athanasios, patriarch of the heretical miaphysites, had on Heraclius that had led to the adoption of this doctrine. This ungodly act had brought about divine wrath throughout the whole empire, which then had to suffer from the new barbarian invasion, i.e. the expansion of the Arabs. This ideological concept of Theophanes is clearly expressed in the chronological structure of his account: the whole narrative dealing with several decades of the monotheletism is given under a single year, AM 6121 (629/630 CE), directly after the description of the triumph of Heraclius over Persia and his entrance into Jerusalem. The following year (AM 6122) opens with a long story on the emergence of the 'false prophet' (Muhammad) – though placed after his death as a sort of inconsequential explanatory note on his life – , as well as providing an account of the expansion of Islam

[51] Pigulevskaya 1967, 55–60; Conrad 1990, 1–44.
[52] Lange 2012, 540–53, Winkelmann 2001, 36; Owsepian 1897, 37–38.
[53] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 329.21–24; tr. Mango & Scott 1997, 460.

and of its theological basis – the new 'heresy', according to common Byzantine terminology. The emergence of Islam should, however, be dated somewhat earlier, to the 610s or early 620s. But Theophanes' artificial construction of the sequence of events is presented in such a way that it serves as an illustration of *immediate* divine punishment of the emperor and the empire for abandoning the true faith.

The deliberately established correlation between the spread of 'heretical' monotheletism and the defeats suffered at the hands of the Arabs is to be seen not only in the structure of Theophanes' work, but is also expressed quite explicitly in his text: "Thus, when the church was then being troubled by emperors and impious priests, Amalek rose up in the desert, smiting us, the people of Christ" (οὕτω δὲ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τότε ὑπό τε τῶν βασιλέων καὶ τῶν δυσσεβῶν ἱερέων ταραττομένης, ἀνέστη ὁ ἐρημικώτατος Ἀμαλὴκ τύπτων ἡμᾶς τὸν λαὸν τοῦ Χριστοῦ).[54] Then follows a long list of Roman defeats and the loss of cities, which ends in the statement that 'all that' did not cease until the heresy was condemned and overcome, so very precisely linking heresy with defeat, though both are placed in what appears to be a deliberately inaccurate historical sequence. The historically wrong sequence of events in Theophanes' account achieves its climax with the double mention of Heraclius's death. The emperor died twice: in the middle of the chronicler's narrative on monotheletism[55] and again in the account of the year AM 6132 (640/641 CE),[56] which corresponds to the actual date of his death.[57]

Concerning Heraclius's engagement in the events of the sorrowful part of his reign, Theophanes made use of several techniques to represent it in a way that would fit into his general scheme. First of all, even though he reproached the emperor for falling into heresy, he tried to soften Heraclius's guilt in spreading it. He thus applied the same technique that he had used in a similar case (with Theophylact Simocatta): he made someone else responsible for the fault. That is why the very idea of monotheletism is ascribed to Athanasios, patriarch of the Jacobites, a native Syrian, though historically it originated from Heraclius and patriarch Sergios of Constantinople.[58] As for the numerous Christian defeats suffered at the hands of the Arabs, Theophanes did not attempt to make up a special explanatory scheme for that. The defeats suffered by the empire were simply not Christian defeats for him, because they were defeats of a state that had fallen into heresy. And according to Theophanes, Heraclius acted under these circumstances in a strange way: residing in Edessa, he repeatedly sent armies and

[54] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 332.8–11.
[55] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 330.31–331.1.
[56] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 341.13–15.
[57] Kaegi 2003, 290.
[58] Winkelmann 2001, 36; Owsepian 1897, 37–38.

reinforcements against the Arabs, but it did not work at all[59] – his armies were beaten, and his cities, one after another, capitulated or were taken by the enemy. Theophanes enumerated the names of the lost cities without expressing any emotion: in AM 6127 Jerusalem capitulated, and an Arab commander "made all of Syria subject to the Saracens" (ὑπέταξε πάσαν τὴν Συρίαν τοῖς Σαραχηνοῖς),[60] in AM 6129 the Arabs captured Antioch (παρέλαβον οἱ Ἄραβες τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν),[61] in AM 6130 it was Edessa that capitulated before the Arabs.[62] The emperor was represented somehow in the background of the scene. The chronicler obviously wanted to portray the absolute impotence of the empire and its emperor, brought about, as shown above, by some supernatural cause that was well known to him.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The analysis of Theophanes' account of the reign of Heraclius has shown that in this part of his *Chronographia* as elsewhere the author was not a simple and humble compiler of the works of his predecessors. He created a new image of Heraclius, which is ambivalent and not integrated (Heraclius is, in succession, both a pious emperor and a heretic) and not to be found in any of his sources known to us. Yet in doing so, he has still remained close to the wording of his sources where these are available to us. Because of the closeness of his wording to that of his sources, earlier scholarship, notably that of Cyril Mango, has viewed his chronicle as a somewhat uncritical dossier of passages that may well have been collected by his friend George Synkellos and passed on to Theophanes with instructions to turn the passages into a chronicle.[63] It remains true that the chronicle is based on such a dossier of passages, and recognition also needs be given to the huge achievement in creating that dossier. More recent scholarship has, however, given more attention to Theophanes' technique of adapting material from that dossier while still retaining much of the source's actual wording, and by doing so creating a different impression from that of his source and instead supporting an interpretation of history that showed God rewarding piety and orthodoxy with military success and heresy with military failure. Jenny Ferber was the first to draw attention to this with her study of Heraclius, which was accepted by Jakov Ljubarskij (1995) and by Alexander Kazhdan (1999). Ferber's work led Scott into showing Theophanes' manipulation of his source material for Constantine I, Theodosius II, Marcian and Justinian

[59] Theophanes, *Chronographia* 336.14–20, 336.27–337.3, 337.8–10 ff.
[60] Ibid., 339.15–35.
[61] Ibid., 340.10–15.
[62] Ibid., 340.20–24.
[63] Mango 1978, 9–17.

among major emperors as well as pointing to indications of it among the less significant emperors of the fourth and fifth centuries.[64] Irina Tamarkina has now also demonstrated Theophanes' same manipulation in his presentation of iconoclasm,[65] while several other essays from the 2012 Paris conference on Theophanes[66] have drawn attention to other aspects of the complexity of his narrative, so virtually covering the entire chronicle. I trust my own study has both refined and expanded Ferber's earlier initial study which, with a different emphasis, was much more general in its treatment, by drawing attention to additional features. These are the alterations to Theophylact Simocatta's and Pisides' text, context, and syntax to provide a significantly different historical context, Theophanes' creation of special metrical effects, his omission of some well-known events that did not suit his overall interpretation, his alterations to his source's chronology and particularly the adoption of a four-part structure that enabled Theophanes, despite the actual facts, to associate Heraclius's military success with his piety and his descent into heresy with military failure. Although Theophanes' account needs to be read with greater caution, I trust that I have shown that a greater awareness must also be paid to the complexity of his writing and the reasons for it.

[64] Scott 1994, 1996, 2006, 2010 and 2015.
[65] Tamarkina 2015.
[66] Jankowiak & Montinaro 2015.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Chronicon miscellaneum ad annum Domini 724 pertinens. Ed. tr. Chabot, I.-B. *Chronica minora II.* CSCO. Vol 4. Scriptores Syri. Vol 4. Louvain 1955.

Chronicon paschale. Ed. L. Dindorf. Vol. 1. CSHB, Bonn 1832.

Dorotheos of Monemvasia, *Biblion istoricon*. Ed. Nicolaos Glycas. Venice, 1818.

George the Monk, *Chronikon*. Ed. C. de Boor. Vol. 2. Leipzig 1904.

George of Pisidia, poems. Ed. tr. L. Tartaglia, *Carmi di Giorgio di Pisidia*.Turin 1998.

George of Pisidia, *Bellum avaricum*. Ed. Pertusi, A. *Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi. I. Panegirici epici.* Ettal 1959, 176–200.

——— *Expeditio persica*. Ed. A. Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi. I. Panegirici epici*. Ettal 1959, 84–136.

——— *In Bonum patricium*. Ed. A. Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi. I. Panegirici epici*. Ettal 1959, 163–70.

——— *Heraclias*. Ed. A. Pertusi, *Giorgio di Pisidia. Poemi. I. Panegirici epici*. Ettal 1959, 240–61.

Glykas, Michael, *Annales*. Ed I. Bekker. CSHB. Bonn, 1836

Kedrenos, George, *Synopsis historion*. Ed. L. Tartaglia, 2 vols, Supplemento n. 30 al Bollettino dei Classici Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Rome 2016.

Methodios of Constantinople, Βίος τοῦ ὁσίου πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ ὁμολογητοῦ Θεοφάνους. Ποίημα Μεθοδίου πατριάρχου Κωνσταντινουπόλεως. Ed. D. Spyridonov, Ἐκκλησιαστικὸς Φάρος 12 (1913): 95–96, 113–65

Miracula sancti Demetrii. Ed. P. Lemerle. *Les plus anciens recueils des miracles de saint Démétrius et la pénétration des Slaves dans les Balkans*. Vol. 1. Paris 1979.

Simocatta, Theophylact. *Historiarum libri octo*. Ed. I. Bekker CSHB. Bonn 1834.

Stoudites, Theodore, *Laudatio*. Ed. S. Efthymiadis, "Le Panégyrique de S. Theophane le Confesseur par S. Théodore Stoudite (BHG 1792b)" *AnBoll* 111 (1993), 259–90.

Suidae lexicon. Ed. A. Adler. 5 vols. Leipzig 1928–1938.

Theophanes, *Chronographia*. Ed. C. de Boor. Vol. 1, Leipzig 1883.Tr. C. Mango and R. S. Scott, *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor*. Oxford 1997.

Zonaras, John, *Annales*. Ed. M. Pinder and T. Büttner-Wobst. 3 vols. CSHB. Bonn 1841–1897

Secondary sources

Averintsev, S. 1972. "К уяснению смысла надписи над конхой центральной апсиды Софии Киевской", in V. Lazarev et al. (eds) 1972. *Древнерусское искусство и художественная культура домонгольской Руси*. Moscow, 25–49.

Codoñer, J. S., 2015. "Theophanes at the time of Leo VI", in Jankowiak and Montinaro (eds) 2015, 53–72.

Conrad, L. 1990. "Theophanes and the Arabic historical tradition: some indications of intercultural transmission" *ByzForsch* 15 (1990), 1–44.

Ferber, J. 1981. "Theophanes' account of the reign of Heraclius", in E. Jeffreys, M. Jeffreys, & A. Moffatt (eds) 1981. *Byzantine Papers. Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference.* ByzAus 1, Canberra, 32–42.

Frend, W., 1972. *The Rise of the Monophysite Movement*. Cambridge.

Grumel, V. 1958. *La chronologie*. Vol. 1. Paris.

Haldon, J. 1997. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century: The Transformation of a Culture*. Cambridge.

Howard-Johnston, J. 1994. "The official history of Heraclius' Persian campaigns", in Dabrowa, E. (ed.). 1994. *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*. Cracow, 57–87.

——— 2010. *Witnesses to a World Crisis. Historians and Histories of the Middle East in the Seventh Century.* Oxford and New York.

Jankowiak, M. 2007. "Framing universal history: Syncellus' canon and Theophanes' rubrics", in Jankowiak and Montinaro (eds) 2007, 53–72.

Jankowiak, M. and F. Montinaro (eds) 2015. *Studies in Theophanes*, *Travaux et Mémoires* 19. Paris.

Karayannopulos, J. and G. Weiss 1982. *Quellenkunde zur Geschichte von Byzanz (324–1453).* Wiesbaden.

Kaegi, W. 2003. *Heraclius: Emperor of Byzantium*. Cambridge.

Kazhdan, A. (ed.) 1991. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*. New York and Oxford.

——— (in collaboration with L. F. Sherry and Ch. Angelidi), 1999. *A History of Byzantine Literature (650–850).* Athens.

Kuzenkov, P. 2006. "Хронография Георгия Синкелла – Феофана Исповедника: хронологический аспект", in ΚΑΝΙΣΚΙΟΝ: Юбилейный сборник в честь 60-летия проф. И. С. Чичурова. Moscow, 156–68.

Lange, C. 2012. *Mia Energeia*. Tübingen.

Ljubarskij, J. *1984*. "Феофан Исповедник и источники его Хронографии" *Vizantinskij vremmenik* 45 (1984), 72–86.

——— 1995. "Concerning the Literary Technique of Theophanes the Confessor" *BS* 56, 305–16.

Mango, C. 1978. "Who wrote the *Chronicle* of Theophanes?" *ZRVI* 8, 9–17.

Moravczik, G. 1983. *Byzantinoturcica: die byzantinischen Quellen der Geschichte der Türkenvölker*. 3rd ed. Vol.1. Leiden.

Nilsson, I. and R. Scott 2007. "Towards a new history of Byzantine literature: the case of historiography" *Classica and Mediaevalia* 58, 319–32.

Norwich, J. J. 1988–1995. *Byzantium*, 3 vols. London.

Owsepian, G. 1897. *Die Entstehungsgeschichte des Monotheletismus nach ihren Quellen geprüft und dargestellt*. Leipzig.

Pigulevskaya, N. 1967. "Theophanes' Chronographia and the Syrian chronicles" *JÖB* 16, 55–60.

Proudfoot, A. 1974. "The sources of Theophanes for the Heraclian dynasty" *Byzantion* 44, 367–439.

Rochow, I. 1991. *Byzanz im 8 Jahrhundert in der Sicht des Theophanes*. Berlin.

Ronconi, F. 2015. "La première circulation de la *Chronique de Théophane*: notes paléographiques et codicologiques", in Jankowiak and Montinaro 2015, 121–48.

Scott, R. 1994. "The image of Constantine in Malalas and Theophanes", in P. Magdalino, (ed.) 1994. *New Constantines: The Rhythm of Imperial Renewal in Byzantium, 4th–13th Centuries.* SPBS 2, Aldershot, Hants, 1994, 57–71.

——— 1996. "Writing the reign of Justinian: Malalas versus Theophanes", in Allen, P. and E. Jeffreys (eds) 1996. *The Sixth Century: End or Beginning?* ByzAus 10, Brisbane, 20–34.

——— 2006. "The events of every year, arranged without confusion: Justinian and others in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes Confessor", in P. Odorico, P. Agapitos, M. Hinterberger (eds), *L'écriture de la mémoire: la littérarité de I'historiographie.* Paris, 49–65.

——— 2010. "From propaganda to history to literature: the Byzantine stories of Theodosius' apple and Marcian's eagles", in R. Macrides (ed.), *History as Literature in Byzantium,* SPBS 15, Aldershot, Hants, 115–31.

——— 2015. "The first half of Theophanes' *Chronicle*", in Jankowiak and Montinaro (eds) 2015, 239–60.

Speck, P. 1988. *Das geteilte Dossier. Beobachtungen zu den Nachrichten über die Regierung des Kaisers Herakleios und seiner Söhne bei Theophanes und Nicephoros*. Bonn.

——— 1994. "Der 'zweite' Theophanes. Eine These zur Chronographie des Theophanes", in *Varia* V (*Poikilia Byzantina* 13). Bonn, 431–88.

——— 2003. "The Virgin's help for Constantinople" *BMGS* 27 (2003), 266–71.

Stratos, A. 1968. *Byzantium in the Seventh Century, 602–711*. Tr. from Greek by M. Ogilvie-Grant and H. Hionides. Vol. 1. Amsterdam.

Tamarkina, I. 2015. "Veneration of relics in the *Chronicle* of Theophanes", in Jankowiak and Montinaro (eds) 2015, 261–67.

Whitby, M. 1994. "A new image for a new age: George of Pisidia on the emperor Heraclius", in E. Dabrowa (ed.), *The Roman and Byzantine Army in the East*. Cracow, 197–225.

Winkelmann, F. 2001. *Der monoenergetisch-monotheletische Streit*. Frankfurt am Main.

Zuckerman, C. 2015. "Theophanes the Confessor and Theophanes the Chronicler, or A story of square brackets", in Jankowiak and Montinaro (eds) 2015, 31–52.

13

LE ROMAN DE THÈBES : L'AUTOCITATION COMME STRATÉGIE NARRATIVE DANS L'HISTOIRE DE NICÉTAS CHÔNIATÈS

Stanislas Kuttner-Homs

Si genette et Barthes ont montré que tout texte est fait de tous les autres textes, il convient de noter que l'œuvre de Nicétas Chôniatès (c. 1155-c. 1217) est aussi faite d'elle-même. En effet, il a été remarqué par l'éditeur scientifique de l'*Histoire*, du *De signis*, des *Discours* et des *Lettres* que, régulièrement, l'historien et orateur de cour s'autocite[1]. Une lecture attentive du corpus nicétéen montre que des expressions voire des paragraphes entiers se retrouvent d'un ouvrage à l'autre[2]. D'un point de vue général, l'autocitation a peu intéressé les études littéraires. Parmi les phénomènes intertextuels ou intratextuels[3], l'autocitation est connue de Genette et Ricardou, mais ils ne la nomment pas[4] ; Limat-Letellier et Miguet-Ollagnier en font mention, en passant, à la fin du siècle dernier[5] ; les linguistes semblent plus enclins à son étude[6], mais les classicistes s'y sont rarement intéressés[7].

[1] Le verbe « autociter » et le nom « autocitation » ne sont pas nouveaux et sont attestés dans les dictionnaire, bien que le *Trésor de la Langue française* ne les connaisse pas. Ces deux termes ont dû naître dans les années 1960–80, à la suite de travaux de linguistes dans la filiation de Carnap et Jakobson et des critiques dans la filiation de Genette et Kristeva, sans que nous ayons pu déterminer avec certitude leur première attestation.

[2] Dieten 1972, 275 ; Dieten 1975, 138–40.

[3] Limat-Letellier & Miguet-Ollagnier 1998, 28 : l'intratextualité est le fait qu'un écrivain «réutilise un motif, un fragment de texte qu'il rédige ou quand son projet rédactionnel est mis en rapport avec une ou plusieurs œuvres antérieures (auto-références, auto-citations) ». Au début de ce siècle, Sharrock 2001, 5–11, sans vouloir poser une définition fermée ni une grande théorie de l'intratextualité, la définit, pour la littérature classique, comme une pratique textuelle de segmentation et de combinaison.

[4] L'intratextualité a été pensée par Ricardou 1975 et Genette 1982, qu'il range, sans la nommer, parmi les phénomènes intertextuels. Le premier à la nommer est Fitch 1983.

[5] Limat-Letellier & Miguet-Ollagnier 1998, 28.

[6] Lopez Muñoz 2006 ; Rakotoelina 2006.

[7] Lüneburg 1888 & Tronchet 2003 sont dédiés à l'autocitation chez Ovide. Pour l'autocitation chez Chôniatès, cf. Kuttner-Homs 2014.

Pourtant, le phénomène ne saurait être anodin. L'autocitation n'est pas rare chez les Anciens[8] et occupe une place particulière dans les pratiques imitatives, puisque l'auteur s'imite lui-même[9]. Pour s'en tenir à la littérature byzantine, une telle pratique permet sans doute à l'auteur de réitérer les passages qui avaient plu lors d'une précédente *performance*[10] et de favoriser, par cette autopromotion[11], une certaine connivence avec son public, soudé autour d'un *shared knowledge* voire d'une *inside joke*[12]. Ces différentes explications sous-entendent donc que l'autocitation est un phénomène conscient et calculé. Conscient : la chose ne fait pas de doute. On verrait mal un rhéteur de la trempe de Chôniatès ne pas savoir qu'il manie l'art de l'écriture[13]. Calculé : la question peut faire débat, surtout pour nous, modernes, habitués aux théories freudiennes sur le *lapsus* et le jeu de mot et passés par les expériences d'écriture automatique du Surréalisme.

Sur ce dernier point, la chronologie de composition du corpus nicétéen fournit des éléments probants. Dans la carrière littéraire de Nicétas, l'année 1204 a été une vraie chance, car à partir de cette date, Nicétas a pu donner à son œuvre l'ampleur qu'elle a conservée jusqu'à nos jours ainsi que son édition finale. En exil, il remanie profondément l'*Histoire* et en compose, comme en témoignent les états antérieurs du texte que les manuscrits ont conservés, une ultime rédaction qui est celle que van Dieten a éditée[14]. Toujours en exil, Nicétas sélectionne les *Discours* et les *Lettres*, qui ne représentent sans doute pas l'ensemble des lettres et des discours qu'il eut l'occasion d'écrire[15], et dont certains furent peut-être composés *ad hoc* pour l'édition finale[16]. Les lemmes des discours, qui disent « je » ou « moi » pour désigner l'auteur, témoignent

[8] De même qu'elle ne l'est pas chez les Modernes, comme les textes d'Hugo, d'Éluard ou de Marguerite Duras le montrent. Cf. Bourgeois 2008.

[9] L'imitation chez les Anciens est un dossier vaste et ne cesse d'occuper la byzantinologie par son ampleur et la variété de ses formes. On trouvera dans Nilsson 2010, 195–200 les principaux articles sur le sujet, mais l'*imitatio sui* ne semble pas avoir fait l'objet d'une étude particulière.

[10] On parlera à la suite de Nilsson 2010, 200 de « *performative mimesis* ».

[11] L'autocitation chez Aristophane est analysée comme telle par Wright 2012, 71–76 ; 90–102.

[12] Dans l'*Apocoloquintose*, Sénèque s'autoparodie, ce qui est le signe d'une connivence avec son public, d'une blague d'initié et d'une conscience critique certaine de son propre travail ; cf. Foucher 2013, 266.

[13] Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, notamment 356–78.

[14] Van Dieten 1975 : LVI-CI. Simpson 2006, Simpson 2013, 68–123, a repris le dossier des cinq états de l'*Histoire* et y apporte des éléments nouveaux et probants.

[15] Van Dieten 1972, VIII. Pour les discours, l'absence de témoignage rend l'évaluation difficile, mais pour les lettres, il est en revanche très probable que Nicétas eut au moins pour correspondant son frère Michel, l'*Ep.* 1 de ce dernier répondant à une lettre perdue de Nicétas.

[16] Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 183–91. La chose n'a rien de surprenant : les Anciens ne documentent pas leur carrière littéraire et n'ont pas le culte de l'archive, contrairement à l'époque contemporaine ; cf. Hartog 2003. L'empereur Julien semble avoir fait de même, cf. García Ruiz 2015. Pour l'époque moderne, l'exemple le plus fameux demeure celui des lettres de Marguerite Yourcenar,

de cette entreprise éditoriale. De même, le *De signis* et la *Panoplie dogmatique* naissent à Nicée, probablement tous deux après 1206, voire, comme nous le pensons, en 1215[17], et semblent relever du même effort de se concilier le lointain et puissant Constantin Mésopotamitès[18].

Nicétas garde donc la main, jusqu'à la fin de sa vie, sur son œuvre. L'autocitation a donc peu de chance d'être le fruit du hasard. Les différentes formes qu'elle revêt semblent le confirmer. En effet, en terme de longueur, les échos peuvent embrasser un groupe de deux ou trois mots, comme χθὲς καὶ πρώην, ou un long paragraphe, comme dans le cas d'un passage dédié à la croisade de Barberousse que l'on trouve présent dans l'*Histoire* et dans l'*Or.* 9[19]. Ce dernier cas est le moins fréquent. Parmi les autocitations, quelques unes seulement peuvent être nommées « parfaites », au sens où elles sont reprises *verbatim* d'un texte à l'autre. Ce sont majoritairement des formules assez communes, comme εἰ δυνατόν, que J. L. van Dieten a tenu à relever, et que pour notre part nous ne retiendrons pas pour cette étude.

Nous disons bien «un grand nombre » et non la totalité, puisqu'il est fort probable que certaines formules ou tournures, même propres au seul Nicétas, fassent partie d'un répertoire de *topoi*, à l'image des épiclèses divines dans la poésie épique. Toutefois, il faut se garder de systématiser ce genre de grille de lecture. Certaines tournures «toutes faites » ne semblent pas avoir la valeur d'un ornement, mais une valeur sémantique discrète, un sens subreptice. Par exemple, la formule Ἑρμοῦ θεράπων καὶ Ἄρεος, désignant Isaac II Ange dans l'Épithalame que lui dédia Nicétas (*Or.* 5)[20], sert aussi, dans l'*Histoire*, sous la forme ἀνὴρ ἑρμαϊκὸς ὁμοῦ καὶ ἀρεϊκός, à désigner Jean Doucas, aristocrate de la cour de Manuel Ier Comnène[21]. Il est très probable que cette tournure constitue l'idéal aristocratique du temps : un homme versé dans les arts et dans les armes. Pourtant, à suivre les destins des deux hommes, le lecteur n'est pas sans ressentir un certain malaise. Jean Doucas, commandant de la flotte de Manuel Comnène contre les Siciliens, remporta plusieurs victoires et souleva de grands espoirs, avant d'être fait prisonnier à la bataille de Brindisi. Après quoi sa trace se perd[22]. Isaac Ange, de son côté, souleva aussi de grands espoirs après la tyrannie sanglante d'Andronic Comnène, mais

qui faisait réécrire absolument toute sa correspondance, envoyée et reçue, par Grace Frick, sans qu'on sache ce que Yourcenar y a modifié ni en a retranché.

17 Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 211–22. Simpson 2006, 208 suggère 1211.

18 Simpson 2006, 210. Mésopotamitès était archevêque in partibus de Thessalonique et occupait de hautes fonctions à la cour byzantine d'Épire. Il avait été, en tant que fonctionnaire civil, le subordonné de Nicétas sous Isaac II et Alexis III.

19 Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 42.20–31; *Or.*9, 94.11–22.

20 Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or.* 5, 37.20.

21 Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 94.4.

22 Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 94.6–15.

se révéla rapidement un empereur indolent, qui connut également la prison lorsque son frère usurpa le trône ; il n'y disparut pas, mais ne recouvra jamais, dit Nicétas, ses esprits. Le parallèle est troublant, et bien que sa raison d'être ne soit pas immédiatement perceptible, il invite à ne pas juger tous les échos formulaires de l'œuvre de Nicétas à l'aune d'un « stock » de citations où il s'agirait pour lui de puiser mécaniquement.

Ces liens que tisse l'autocitation ne pourraient-ils pas correspondre à une stratégie narrative ? Le sens subreptice, sous-jacent, vise-t-il à construire un récit sous le récit ? Afin d'examiner cette fonction originale de l'autocitation, nous prendrons en considération un ensemble d'autocitations concernant les empereurs qui régnèrent d'Andronic Ier à Alexis IV, et qui semble destiné à construire une autre histoire dans l'*Histoire*[23]. De fait, dans cet ouvrage, les dynasties des Comnènes et des Anges ne semblent former qu'une seule famille. Bien entendu, leur étroite union par le sang et le mariage n'est pas une invention de l'historien. Alexis Ier Comnène a donné en mariage sa fille Théodora, princesse porphyrogénète, à Constantin Ange, un aristocrate d'Asie mineure, dont la famille est mal attestée avant lui[24]. Il semblerait que son fils cadet, Alexis, ait été le premier à porter le nom double d' « Ange Comnène », afin de souligner son appartenance à la famille impériale[25]. Alexis III, après quelques années de règne, prendra lui-même le nom de Comnène plutôt que celui d'Ange, afin de montrer ses liens avec la prestigieuse dynastie qui était tombée quelque dix ans plus tôt. Nicétas a conservé le souvenir de ce changement dans ses discours : l'*Oratio* 7 est adressée à l'empereur Alexis Ange, l'*Oratio* 10 à Alexis Comnène. Il rapporte également dans l'*Histoire* ce changement de nom qu'il juge présomptueux et ridicule[26]. La continuité dynastique était toutefois suffisamment importante pour que toutes les dynasties suivantes revendiquent leur part de l'héritage des Comnènes.

La réunion des deux dynasties en une seule famille régnante favorise la mise en scène de son destin hors norme. En effet, à l'instar des familles royales de la tradition mythique, la grande famille des Comnènes et des Anges est marquée par les querelles fra-

[23] *L'Histoire* est histoire, et l'Histoire byzantine tout particulièrement. Cf. entre autres Nilsson 2014, 87–134.

[24] Jean Zonaras, *Extractes* 3, 740.1–2.

[25] Cette pratique était courante dans l'aristocratie byzantine et slave : Manuel Érotikos, le premier ancêtre attesté des Comnènes, portait sans doute le nom de sa mère parce que plus prestigieux que son patronyme. De même, le prince Vladimir Monomaque, qui régna sur les Russes au XIe s., prit le nom de sa mère, fille de Constantin IX. Le même phénomène existe pour l'aristocratie occidentale, souvent afin de conserver un titre et un domaine matrilinéaires plus valorisés que ceux hérités du père. Il est ainsi des princes Grimaldi de Monaco ou des ducs de Rohan en Bretagne.

[26] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 459.54–56.

tricides, le meurtre[27] et l'inceste, dont les amours endogames d'Andronic Ier Comnène sont la meilleure illustration[28]. Ainsi, l'alliance de tels crimes en une seule famille semble une invitation à voir sous le récit principal de l'Histoire un autre récit, sous-jacent, plus tragique, plus romanesque : une *Thébaïde*, en sorte que l'Histoire des Comnènes et des Anges serait la réécriture de la tragédie des Labdacides.

Afin d'examiner la possibilité de stratégie narrative, nous nous intéresserons dans un premier temps à l'autocitation d'un *topos*, celui de la pomme de Discorde ; nous étudierons dans un second temps les autocitations concernant Isaac II ; nous analyserons dans un dernier temps les liens que tisse l'autocitation entre Andronic Ier et ses successeurs.

LA POMME DE DISCORDE : LE DESTIN FUNESTE D'ALEXIS IV

On trouve dans l'*Histoire*[29], dans l'*Oratio* 5[30] et dans le *De signis* de Nicétas[31], une référence à la pomme de Discorde. Ce détail n'est peut-être aussi innocent qu'il le paraît à première vue, mais semble destinée à placer l'union d'Isaac II Ange et de Marguerite de Hongrie sous le sceau de l'inceste. Cette idée, absurde au regard des sources dont dispose l'historien moderne, est suggérée au lecteur de l'*Histoire* par le lien que tisse l'autocitation entre le couple formé par Isaac et Marguerite et celui qui unit deux bâtards de la famille impériale, Irène Comnène et Alexis Comnène.

Dans l'*Histoire*, Nicétas raconte qu'Andronic Ier réussit à faire accepter le mariage incestueux d'Irène Comnène et d'Alexis Comnène, qui étaient demi-frères. Irène, en

[27] Pour s'en tenir aux luttes entre frères *stricto sensu*, il convient de noter que, dès l'ouverture de l'Histoire, Anne Comnène fomente un complot contre son frère Jean II. Ensuite, à la mort de Jean II, Manuel Ier met son frère aîné aux arrêts. Lorsque Manuel Ier meurt, sa fille Marie fomente un complot contre son frère Alexis II. Isaac II est renversé par son propre frère. Alexis III est renversé par son frère Isaac II et le fils de celui-ci.

[28] Il est l'amant des femmes aimées par son cousin Manuel Ier. D'abord amant d'Eudocie, nièce de Manuel Ier, il est ensuite l'amant de Philippa d'Antioche, sœur de Marie d'Antioche, épouse de Manuel Ier, puis l'amant de Théodora Comnène, qui fut l'amante de Manuel Ier. Revenu à Constantinople, il tente de séduire Marie d'Antioche, avant d'épouser Agnès de France, épouse du fils de Manuel Ier. Techniquement, les relations amoureuses d'Andronic ne sont pas incestueuses, mais le droit canonique byzantin les interdit fermement ; cf. Nicétas Chôniatès, Histoire 226, 72 ; Histoire 54, 72. Laiou 1992, 20 n. 1 ; 49–50 signale les sources juridiques de l'interdiction de ces relations endogames et revient sur la manière dont Nicétas traite les relations amoureuses et matrimoniales des Comnènes. La loi interdisant les relations avec les cousines au second degré date de 1166 et fut promulguée par Manuel Ier (dirigée contre Andronic ?) ; cf. Laiou 1992, 46–47 ; Pontani 1994–2014, 13 n. 28. Andronic ira jusqu'à « fabriquer » un inceste, comme nous le verrons plus bas.

[29] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 260.61–62.

[30] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or.* 5, 42.4.

[31] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 648.43–44.

effet, était née de l'union de Manuel Ier avec Théodora Comnène ; Alexis, des amours d'Andronic – qui n'était pas encore souverain – avec cette même Théodora. Nicétas raconte avec écœurement qu'il se trouva des juristes pour défendre la demande d'Andronic, qui exerçait alors la régence. Les plus sensés des hauts dignitaires civils et ecclésiastiques sollicités soulignaient qu'une telle union serait doublement incestueuse, car déjà marquée du péché d'inceste, puisque que Théodora était la nièce de Manuel Ier. L'image de la pomme de Discorde intervient à cet endroit. Ce faisant, Nicétas permet au lecteur de saisir les deux références que véhicule l'image : la présence de la division entre les puissants, certes, mais aussi le contexte de l'allusion – un mariage – et rappelle que la pomme de Discorde fut lancée au milieu des noces de Thétis et Pélée.

Ce contexte narratif est précisément celui qui occupe Nicétas dans l'Épithalame dédié à Isaac II Ange et Marguerite de Hongrie. L'allusion mythologique est, dans ce poème, destinée à rehausser le faste et la liesse des noces impériales : elles n'ont rien à envier aux noces mythiques de Pélée, car la Discorde n'y prend aucune part et nul destin tragique ne saurait les couronner. Ainsi, contrairement à l'*Histoire*, l'image de la pomme de Discorde ne convoque que le contexte des noces et laisse de côté la Discorde. Les échos de l'autocitation sont donc employés de manière contradictoire. Mais malgré cette contradiction, serait-il possible que l'apparence du texte (récit) ne corresponde pas à la réalité de la narration (récit sous-jacent) ? Nicétas a-t-il voulu suggérer au lecteur que les noces d'Isaac et Marguerite aussi sont incestueuses ? Plusieurs éléments le laissent penser.

Tout d'abord, Nicétas semble chercher à renforcer le lien d'Isaac Ange avec la première Rome. Il ne cesse pas, dans l'*Oratio* 5 et dans le poème en vers politiques qui lui fait suite, de nommer « Ausonien » et « Ausonarque » le souverain[32]. Ces épithètes renvoient à l'ancien nom grec, repris par l'épopée, des habitants de l'Italie. Archaïsant, il désigne les Romains, comme, parfois chez Nicétas, « Byzantins » fait référence aux Constantinopolitains. Plus encore, Nicétas rapporte dans l'*Histoire* qu'Isaac Ange prétendait descendre d'Énée et que, persuadé que la gloire était promise par cette my-

[32] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or. 5*, 38.3 ; 45.22 ; 44.42 ; 44.53. Le titre d'Ausonarque est assez courant chez les auteurs des XIe-XIIe s., au moment où les Comnènes, sous l'impulsion de Jean II cherchent à axer leur propagande sur le passé proprement romain de l'Empire, afin de contrer les prétentions universelles du Saint Empire et faire valoir leur domination de droit sur l'ensemble de la Méditerranée. Manuel Ier cherchera durant tout son règne à rétablir l'Empire sur tous les fronts : il reprend l'Illyrie, affronte les Daces, poursuit la politique de son père au Levant, lance une expédition contre la Sicile, une autre contre l'Égypte, traite avec le pape pour obtenir, en échange de l'union des Église, l'union des Empires au profit du sien. Son ambition est la même que celle de Justinien six siècles auparavant.

thique ascendance à lui et à sa descendance, il évitait de se mêler aux combats[33]. Il est difficile de dire à quelle histoire familiale remontait ce détail généalogique. Était-ce à la famille byzantine des Énéades à laquelle les Comnènes étaient liés ?[34] Était-ce à un aïeul de l'Antiquité tardive issu des Julio-Claudiens ?[35] Dans l'état actuel de nos connaissances, rien ne permet de trancher historiquement cette question. En revanche, cette prétention généalogique peut expliquer en partie la singulière titulature que Nicétas donne à Isaac Ange. Il est tout à fait probable qu'il forme un des éléments de la propagande personnelle du souverain. Le nouveau souverain ramène l'ordre des anciens jours parce qu'il renoue avec le passé de l'ancienne Rome.

Ensuite, sans doute afin d'asseoir cette propagande, Nicétas a renforcé les liens de Marguerite de Hongrie avec la première Rome. Nicétas prétend ainsi que la nouvelle impératrice descend de la *gens Iulia* : Ἀναφέρει γὰρ τὰς πρώτας τοῦ γένους καταβολὰς ἐς Καίσαρας Ἰουλίους καὶ Αὐγούστους τοὺς μοναρχήσαντας, « De fait, son ascendance remonte à la première lignée de la race issue de Jules César et d'Auguste, qui régnèrent en monarques »[36]. Les noces d'Isaac II et de Marguerite permettent alors de lier deux branches de la famille fondatrice de Rome et signalent publiquement que, de manière auspicieuse, un cycle s'achève et un nouveau commence. Dans l'Épithalame, le règne d'Isaac II n'est pas seulement le retour à l'ordre et à la paix après la tyrannie d'Andronic ni uniquement la fin de la dynastie des Comnènes, c'est la venue d'un Ange, le retour

[33] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 284.49–52. Malgré nos recherches, nous n'avons pas trouvé de références sur cette prétention généalogique. Notons toutefois qu'un certain chevalier d'Hénin, officier des dragons et chargé d'affaires du roi de France auprès de la République de Venise, publia en 1789 un *Coup d'œil historique et généalogique sur la maison impériale de [sic] Comnène*. Il y affirme que les Comnènes descendent d'Énée. Les sources, malgré un chapitre dédié (Hénin 1789, 35–41), sont maigres et tardives (l'auteur recourt à Jean Lascaris (XVe-XVIe s.) et Léon Allatius (XVIe s.) ; l'argument d'autorité de la tradition (« il est bien connu que… ») tient lieu d'argumentation. Néanmoins, ce texte, ainsi que celui (perdu) de Jean Lascaris, témoignent d'un désir d'Antiquité chez les grandes familles byzantines, qui n'épargne sans doute pas les Anges.

[34] Le second fils de Jean II Comnène, Andronic le Sébastocrator, avait épousé une Irène Énéadès (la fameuse femme de Lettres, protectrice de Jean Tzetzès), dont Alexis le Protosébaste, qui fut l'amant de Marie d'Antioche, était le fils.

[35] Les grandes familles byzantines ont toujours eu des généalogies prodigieuses d'antiquité, certaines avérées (Constantina, l'épouse de l'empereur Maurice (582–602), descendait de Cléopâtre VII), d'autres plus douteuses (Nicéphore Bryenne, *Matériel*, pr.9) nous apprend que les Doucas descendaient du premier duc de Constantinople, venu depuis Rome avec Constantin le Grand). On assiste sous le règne d'Alexis Ier a une renaissance du goût pour l'Histoire romaine et les plus grandes familles byzantines n'hésitent pas à faire remonter leur arbre au premier Sénat de Romulus. Cf. Neville 2012, Neville 2013.

[36] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or.* 5, 40.17–19; également : *Or.* 5, 36.17. La dynastie des Árpád ne semble pas avoir revendiqué d'ascendance romaine, mais plutôt hunnique ; cf. la *Gesta Hungarorum* (Anonyme, XIIe s.) et Simon de Kéza, *Gesta Hunnorum et Hungarorum* (XIIIe s.).

du roi David – et Nicétas ne cesse de forcer le parallèle entre David et Isaac en insistant sur la rousseur du second, même dans l'*Histoire*[37] – et le retour du fondateur de Rome.

Ces caractéristiques de la personne impériale, favorisées dans l'*Oratio* 5, semblent dénoncées, dans l'*Histoire*, comme autant de signes d'une union incestueuse. Si, techniquement, les noces d'Isaac Ange et de Marguerite Árpád ne sont pas incestueuses ni consanguines, Nicétas ne semble pas le seul à envisager le problème sous cet angle, car nulle part dans l'Épithalame, il n'est fait mention de l'ascendance énéade d'Isaac II. Ce silence est peut-être une précaution oratoire de l'auteur et de son commanditaire pour ne pas raviver, parmi les élites, l'image du tyran Andronic, qui comme la plupart des tyrans de la tradition classique est incestueux[38]. Ainsi, l'ombre d'Andronic Ier se projette sur son successeur. La tradition littéraire a appris à Nicétas et aux élites byzantines que les enfants des incestes apportaient avec eux le malheur. On songera aux fils d'Œdipe, à celui d'Ulysse selon la *Télégonie*, voire, si les poètes occidentaux avaient fait entendre leurs œuvres nationales à la cour de Constantinople, au fils d'Arthur, Mordred.

Dans le *De signis,* la mention de la pomme de Discorde semble faire référence à ce caractère incestueux du tyran. La deuxième statue décrite dans le texte est celle du héros troyen Pâris :

> Καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῇ ὁ Πάρις Ἀλέξανδρος τῆς βάσεως ἀνατέτραπται, συνεστὼς Ἀφροδίτῃ καὶ χειρίζων ταύτῃ τὸ χρύσεον μῆλον τῆς Ἔριδος.
>
> Et près de cette statue, le Pâris Alexandre est renversé de sa base, lui qui se tenait auprès d'une Aphrodite à laquelle il tendait de la main la pomme d'or de Discorde.[39]

[37] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or.* 4, 32.33 ; *Or.* 5, 37.16; 98.12 ; *Histoire*, 452.17. On songera aussi au vers très flatteur du poème de mariage où Nicétas dit que le soleil est le « reflet (ἀντίτυπος) de l'empereur" (*Or.* 5, 45.28). Les autres sources contemporaines insistent aussi sur la rousseur d'Isaac Ange : cf. Georges Tornikès, 2, 274.26–30 ; 280.6–7 éd. Regel ; Michel Chôniatès, 1, 216.3 ; 2, 163.5–7 éd. Lampros. Alexis III semble avoir partagé cet attribut avec son frère, mais en tirant sur le blond ; cf. Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or.* 11, 107.9–10. Le lien au roi David, qui selon la Bible, était roux, favorisait une telle propagande physique. Isaac II savait-il qu'Auguste était blond (Suét., *Aug.* 79), afin de renforcer son lien aux Énéades ? Sans que nous sachions quelle importance Nicétas a pu accorder à ce détail, signalons que lui-même semble avoir été roux ; cf. Nicétas Chôniatès, *Carm.* 2.

[38] Il semblerait que cette image du tyran incestueux vienne de l'âge archaïque, au moment où les tyrans, maîtres de colonies en Asie mineure et en Grande Grèce, reviennent, chassés par les révoltes oligarchiques ou démocratiques, dans leur métropole. Comme l'installation de colons est assimilée à un mariage avec la terre d'accueil, leur retour à la cité-mère est compris, symboliquement, comme un mariage avec leur mère. C'est aussi pour cela qu'Œdipe est *tyrannos* (et non *anax* ou *basileus*) ou que Pisistrate, qui revient à Athènes après en avoir été chassé, est qualifié de tyran avant même sa prise de pouvoir.

[39] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 648.42–43.

Une interprétation « politique » peut être donnée de cette statue. Le fait que Nicétas ait choisi de nommer le héros par les deux noms transmis par la tradition est, d'une part, une rareté textuelle, et d'autre part, le signal d'un jeu de sonorité. De fait, le lecteur est peut-être invité à entendre Ἄλεξις dans ΠάρΙΣ ΑΛΕΞανδρος[40]. Comme Nicétas lie la venue des Latins sur les bords de la Propontide à l'accomplissement de la vengeance des Troyens contre les Grecs[41], il est possible que l'Alexis en question soit le fils d'Isaac II, le jeune Alexis IV, car il fut la cause de la venue de la croisade à Constantinople, sous prétexte d'être rétabli dans ses possessions. La pomme de Discorde, point de départ de la guerre de Troie, deviendrait alors une image des fausses promesses d'Alexis IV Ange aux croisés. Il semble que le continuateur de la *Chronique* de Constantin Manassès ait eu la même interprétation du rôle historique d'Alexis IV[42].

Un autre jeu de mots pourrait le confirmer. Le nominatif Ἔρις pourrait être, grâce à l'iotacisme et à l'amuissement des géminées, une allusion à Ἐρρῆς, la forme grecque du prénom du doge de Venise Enrico Dandolo, que Nicétas tient pour l'un des principaux artisans de la chute de la Ville. En ce sens, et du point de vue du sens sous-jacent, Alexis IV est le fils d'une union incestueuse[43], destinée à apporter le malheur sur sa patrie : fils par le sang (père) et par le droit (belle-mère) de deux descendants d'Énée, son destin est de permettre l'accomplissement de la vengeance des Énéades, c'est-à-dire, non pas de sa famille, mais des Latins. Ce schéma est précisément celui des oracles tragiques : la polysémie des termes est mal interprétée et hâte l'accomplissement de la prophétie[44].

Conséquemment, ce n'est pas tant la valeur « technique » de l'inceste que Nicétas cherche à mettre en exergue grâce à l'autocitation, mais sa valeur « idéologique ». L'historiographe cherche probablement à montrer que les unions incestueuses dépassent parfois les normes humaines et ne se comprennent qu'à l'échelle de la Provi-

[40] Ce jeu sur le signifié, source de toute poésie, est ancienne et remonte à Homère, cf. Starobinsky 1980, Saussure 2013, Testenoire 2013. Il fournit, à de nombreux auteurs classiques, la possibilité d'un message caché, parfois à portée politique, cf. Ahl 1985.

[41] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 653.82, au sujet d'une statue d'Hélène de Troie livrée à la fournaise : *οἱ Αἰνειάδαι οὗτοι πυρί σε κατέκριναν*, « ces fils d'Énée te condamnèrent [ô Hélène] à la fournaise ». Hélène est probablement une image des impératrices étrangères qui régnèrent à Constantinople successivement ; cf. Kuttner-Homs 2015.

[42] *Constantin Manasses continuatus*, 278–80. Le texte est sans doute postérieur à Nicétas et inspiré par son *Histoire*. Cf. Grégoire 1924.

[43] Alexis IV est le fils du premier lit d'Isaac II avec une Paléologina de prénom inconnu. Marguerite de Hongrie est sa belle-mère, mais en droit médiéval, sa mère, ce qui pourrait justifier ce sens sous-jacent.

[44] Songeons, entre autres, au célèbre « Si tu fais la guerre, un grand empire disparaîtra » que la Pythie, selon Hérodote, délivra à Crésus. Les oracles sont nombreux dans l'*Histoire* de Nicétas, cf. Harris 2000 ; Magdalino 2009.

dence. Ainsi, à l'échelle des hommes, Andronic Ier, en essayant de favoriser l'union de deux demi-frères, paye personnellement, entre autres crimes, cette offense à la nature et au droit. À l'échelle de la Providence, Isaac II, en s'unissant à une parente, même éloignée de lui par plus de cinquante générations, longueur de temps qui n'est rien au regard de la justice divine, permet que s'accomplisse un cycle du destin de l'Empire.

L'allusion à la pomme de Discorde permet donc à l'historien de glisser du mythe troyen au mythe thébain de manière originale. Dans ce changement d'atmosphère mythique, le personnage d'Alexis IV est central et rappelle alors, par sa naissance et son rôle, Polynice, fils d'Œdipe et Jocaste, qui lui aussi revint, entouré des chefs argiens, prendre Thèbes. Cette identification est-elle possible ? Il semblerait qu'oui, tant la restauration d'Isaac II sur le trône aux côtés de son fils ressemble à la promesse faite par Polynice à son père dans *l'Œdipe à Colone* de le faire revenir d'exil et, même aveugle, de le faire régner sur leur cité à ses côtés[45].

(NE PAS) VOIR ET (NE PAS) SAVOIR : LE DESTIN ŒDIPIEN D'ISAAC II

La tragédie d'Œdipe joue sur le savoir. *L'Œdipe Roi* et *l'Œdipe à Colone* de Sophocle ont, entre autres, pour ressort un jeu étymologique sur le nom du héros : celui-ci ne serait pas formé sur la racine d'οἰδέω « enfler », mais sur celle d'οἶδα « savoir »[46]. Le jeu est probablement ancien, puisque dans le mythe, la Sphinx propose à Œdipe une énigme qui le décrit et où il ne se reconnaît pas : l'animal qui marche sur quatre pieds, puis deux, puis trois n'est sans doute pas uniquement l'homme, comme le répond Œdipe, mais lui-même, son nom contenant précisément la racine πούς. Œdipe à Colone sera précisément, après sa chute, cet animal à trois pieds : debout mais appuyé sur sa fille Antigone. Le destin d'Œdipe prévoit donc que l'ignorance se paie, en associant étroitement la vue et la connaissance. Les preuves de l'inceste étaient sous les yeux de Jocaste et d'Œdipe depuis le début ; à la fin, Œdipe se crève les yeux de n'avoir pas voulu voir.

Cette situation rappelle celle que Nicétas attribue au personnage d'Isaac II. Isaac est le seul souverain de l'*Histoire* à être aveuglé. Il l'est littéralement à la fin de son règne sur ordre de son frère, mais il l'est aussi symboliquement en n'ayant pas su reconnaître dans

[45] Sophocle, *Œdipe à Colone* 1340–41. On peut d'ailleurs s'interroger sur les liens entre Κόλωνος, où Polynice vient pour chercher son père, et ἡ κατὰ τὸν Διπλοῦν Κίονα Περαία, où Isaac est parvenu, car κόλωνος signifie littéralement « colline » et κίων peut désigner une « montagne » (Homère, *Odyssée* 1.53 ; Eschyle, *Prométhée* 349 ; Pindare, *Pythiques* 1.34 ; Hérodote, *L'Enquête* 4.184).

[46] Liens établis entre voir et savoir : par ex., Sophocle, *Œdipe Roi* 499 ; 505 ; 509 ; le début de l'*Œdipe à Colone*, où Œdipe interroge sa fille et veut voir : Œd*ipe à Colone* 1–13. Le jeu est repris par Sénèque dans son *Œdipe* en le transférant d'οἶδα à *uideo*.

son union avec Marguerite de Hongrie un inceste et en ayant refusé de voir, malgré les rapports insistants d'espions et de courtisans, le complot fomenté par son frère contre lui. Nicétas emploie d'ailleurs à cet endroit de l'*Histoire* l'adjectif κασίγνητος – c'est la seule fois dans l'ensemble du corpus nicétéen – pour parler de l'affection qu'Alexis Ange porte à son frère Isaac. Le texte est manifestement au discours indirect libre : Nicétas rapporte les paroles d'Isaac. Comme ce terme est réservé dans les autres cas pour dire un lien d'amour fraternel infrangible[47], il est manifeste qu'Isaac ne veut pas voir les intentions funestes de son frère[48].

Au moment de sa restauration, Isaac ressemble à Œdipe en exil : conduit par la main avec l'aide d'un tiers, comme Œdipe est mené par Antigone. Le parallèle pourrait être poussé un peu plus loin pour expliquer la mystérieuse disparition d'Isaac de l'*Histoire*. Après avoir été détrôné une seconde fois, Isaac est emprisonné par Alexis V Doucas, mais, alors que Nicétas raconte l'assassinat d'Alexis IV, il ne dit rien du sort d'Isaac et plus aucune mention ne sera faite du personnage. Ce silence historiographique le rapproche de l'Œdipe de l'*Œdipe à Colone*. Le héros disparaît aussi de la scène sans bruit ni prodige : il s'enfonce dans le bois des Euménides où nul ne peut le suivre et y disparaît. Personne ne sait précisément ce qui lui est arrivé ; on suppose son apothéose et l'accomplissement du second oracle d'Apollon à son sujet. On pourrait douter qu'Isaac Ange ait connu une semblable apothéose, mais Nicétas rapporte qu'après sa restauration, Isaac prophétisait qu'« il se changerait totalement en un homme semblable à un dieu »[49].

Les Euménides, sous leur visage d'Érynies, ne sont d'ailleurs jamais loin des héros tragiques. Dans le cas d'Isaac, bien que Nicétas semble refuser de prendre position pour savoir si le châtiment est mérité[50], il n'en fait pas moins mention de la Némésis au moment de conclure le règne du souverain. Plus encore, il ajoute dans la foulée que la Providence (πρόνοια) conduit toutes les situations à se renverser : le pouvoir peut se perdre (τὴν τοῦ κράτους ἀπόζωσιν) et « sous l'effet de son propre mouvement, les choses se renversent souvent vers leur dénouement ou reviennent à leur point de depart » (τὴν

[47] Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 64–70.

[48] Le récit de Nicétas est organisé de telle manière qu'Isaac attire sur lui l'aveuglement : Isaac doute que son frère lui veuille du mal et se compare lui-même à un aveugle guidé par un voyant ! La prophétie est monstrueuse de justesse ; cf. Kaldellis 2009, 85.

[49] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 558.31 : τὸ ὅλον εἰς ἄνδρα θεοείκελον ἀμειφθήσεσθαι.

[50] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 452.3–4 : εἰ δὲ κατὰ θείαν νέμεσιν ἐκεῖσε ταύτην τὴν δίκην ἔτισεν, ἑτέροις σκοπεῖν ἀφίημι, "S'il mérita cette peine par vengeance divine, je laisse à d'autres le soin de l'examiner". Nicétas *semble* refuser de prendre position : à la fin de son règne, Andronic Ier est rattrapé dans sa fuite par les hommes d'Isaac exactement au même endroit où Isaac sera rattrapé par les sicaires de son frère ; cf. Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 352.95. Voilà sans doute pourquoi il laisse au lecteur le soin d'examiner la chose.

ἐκ τοῦ αὐτοῦ κινήματος εἰς τὸ αὐτὸ κατάντημα πολλάκις μετακύβευσιν ἢ παλινδρόμησιν)[51]. L'action du destin est implacable. Isaac Ange intègre parfaitement la scène tragique.

FILIATIONS TRAGIQUES : ANDRONIC IER, PÈRE D'ISAAC II ; ISAAC II, PÈRE D'ALEXIS III

Que le destin d'Isaac II soit lié à celui d'Andronic et à celui d'Alexis III semble une évidence pour Nicétas qui paraît s'employer à rassembler les signes du destin en marche. Ainsi, lors de la seconde réconciliation de Manuel Ier et d'Andronic, ce dernier paraît à la cour vêtu de haillons, comme courbé par les épreuves et les errances. Cet Ulysse byzantin de retour à Ithaque a pris auparavant soin de se charger de chaînes, afin que, sous leur poids, il rampe quasiment aux pieds de l'empereur, en pleurant. Manuel Ier demande que quelqu'un le relève : Isaac Ange se précipite et relève Andronic. Nicétas note que certains y virent, des années plus tard, un signe fatal[52].

La prise de pouvoir d'Isaac lie les deux souverains de manière inattendue. Andronic pensant que son règne entamait un second cycle AIMA craignait qu'un autre homme au nom commençant par *iota* ne prenne le pouvoir[53]. Un sorcier lui ayant révélé qu'il s'agissait d'un homme dont le nom commence par *IS* qui le renverserait avant le 14 septembre, Andronic pense immédiatement à Isaac Comnène, qui gouvernait Chypre et s'était rendu indépendant du pouvoir byzantin. Comme la date était trop proche pour qu'une flotte arrive à Constantinople depuis Chypre, son ministre Hagiochristophoritès décide de faire arrêter Isaac Ange. Celui-ci ne se laisse pas faire, le décapite, ameute le peuple et Andronic est renversé dans la journée[54]. Comme dans les tragédies, le destin s'est accompli malgré les personnages et de manière inattendue.

Enfin, quand Isaac est saisi par les conjurés et aveuglé, il l'est au monastère de Béra qu'avait fait construire le père d'Andronic Comnène[55]. Nicétas précise qu'il laisse le lecteur libre d'y voir l'accomplissement de la Némésis divine, mais le rapprochement des deux événements par l'auteur ne laisse guère de doute sur ses intentions historiographiques. De même, Nicétas relate, vers la fin du règne d'Andronic, un événement qu'il

[51] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 452.6–8. Les termes ἀπόζωσις et μετακύβευσις sont des *hapax*.

[52] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 227.4–7.

[53] La prophétie AIMA prévoyait que la succession des Comnènes formerait, en s'en tenant à l'initiale du prénom des souverains, le mot "sang" en grec. Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 146.36–41 [Manuel Ier croyait en la prophétie AIMA] ; 339, 10–19 [Andronic Ier pense commencer un nouveau cycle AIMA]. Cette prophétie a sans doute commencé à circuler sous le règne de Jean II, cf. Magdalino 1993a, 200, et elle a manifestement un usage politique pour les Comnènes qui finit par leur échapper, cf. Magdalino 1993b.

[54] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 341.65–345.4.

[55] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 452.1–3.

qualifie de « digne d'être raconté » (ἀξιαφήγητος) et qui se rapporte au règne d'Isaac II : un cavalier de la garde impériale ayant perdu le contrôle de sa monture à la Pérea de la Colonne Double[56], on porta le cheval, une fois rattrapé, à Isaac pour qu'il soit sa monture courante[57]. Le don est étrange et l'événement probablement proleptique : Isaac sera emprisonné à la Pérea de la Colonne Double à la fin de son règne[58].

À ces événements, Nicétas adjoint l'autocitation. En effet, il est assez frappant de constater que plusieurs expressions qui se trouvent dans les discours composés sous Isaac II se trouvent dans les livres de l'*Histoire* dédiés à Andronic Ier. Outre l'autocitation des tournures concernant la pomme de Discorde, il s'agit aussi de certaines concernant Typhon ou le mythe de l'Âge d'or[59]. Nicétas évoque aussi la *φαύλη συμμορία* d'Ulysse dans l'épithalame dédié aux noces d'Isaac II[60] et dans l'*Histoire* pour décrire la manière dont Andronic se fit proclamer coempereur d'Alexis II[61]. Andronic étant un nouvel Ulysse[62], Nicétas cherche sans doute à montrer tout ce qui sépare les deux souverains. Isaac Ange, lui, ne s'est pas emparé par ruse du pouvoir, mais grâce à l'acclamation populaire.

Nicétas cite aussi l'*Oratio* 4 dans l'*Histoire*. Dans ce discours écrit à l'occasion de son accession à la charge de Juge du Voile, Nicétas dresse un tableau élogieux des campagnes en Occident menées par Isaac II. Le souverain, dont les yeux et les cheveux sont de feu, « embrase alentour ses ennemis » (*φλογίζει κύκλῳ τοὺς ἐχθροὺς αὐτού*), un thème sur lequel Nicétas joue tout au long de son discours[63]. Il conclut en disant que les barbares d'Occident prient pour que l'empereur aille porter la guerre en Orient ainsi que la lumière insoutenable de son regard, qui est « comme l'assaut d'un feu infatigable » (*ὅσα καὶ πυρὸς ἀκάματον ἐρωήν*)[64]. Cette tournure ne se retrouve qu'une fois dans le corpus nicétéen : dans l'*Histoire*, dans les pages consacrées à la folie d'Andronic Ier. Dans ce cas, l' « assaut du feu » n'est pas figuré, il est littéral : Andronic fait brûler vif un sous-secrétaire du Palais – un certain Alexis Mamalos[65]. Andronic a organisé dans l'Hippodrome un jeu cruel, dans lequel on dresse des piques pour forcer le

[56] Il s'agit d'un bourg à côté de Chalcédoine, en face de Constantinople, actuel quartier de Beşiktas à Istanbul. La porte en était gardée par deux colonnes que les sources byzantines évoquent comme destinées à marquer l'emplacement de tombeaux ; cf. Janin 1964, 471 ; *Patria*, trad. Berger 2013, 700–701 ; Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* éd. Pontani 1994–2014, 291 n.135.

[57] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 346.5–9.

[58] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 452.11.

[59] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or*. 5, 39.18–21; *Histoire* 281.57–58.

[60] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or. 5*, 39.5.

[61] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 269.4.

[62] Vassilikopoulou-Ioannidou 1969–1970; Gaul 2003 ; Saxey 2009.

[63] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or* 4, 26.14 ; 17 ; 18 ; 20 ; 27.21 ; 34.8.

[64] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Or* 4, 34.8–9.

[65] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 310.61–311.89.

pauvre homme à se diriger vers le feu : celui-ci ne cesse de se blesser à ces lances, « parce qu'il jugeait les douleurs provoquées par les piques plus supportables que l'assaut du feu et les tapis de charbons » (μετριωτέρας κρίνων τὰς ἐκ τούτων ὀδύνας τῆς τοῦ πυρὸς ἐρωῆς καὶ τοῦ ἐπ' ἀνθράκων ἁπλώματος)[66]. Le point commun entre les deux empereurs est probablement l'aveuglement : on sait que l'incandescence des yeux d'Isaac II lui sera ravie à la fin de son règne, parce qu'il n'a pas voulu voir le complot qui se tramait contre lui ; Andronic, au moment de l'assassinat d'Alexis Mamalos, sait que Thessalonique est tombée entre les mains des Normands, mais, plutôt que de lever une armée pour se mettre en marche, Nicétas le décrit comme continuant de se livrer à sa folie sanguinaire. Andronic ne voit pas que l'Empire est en grand danger et que ses jours sont désormais comptés.

Andronic, que nous avons vu marqué par l'inceste semble donc aussi, à sa manière, aveugle. Dans ce cas, ne pourrait-il pas jouer le rôle de Laios ? Dans la tragédie des Labdacides, Laios est averti par un oracle d'Apollon que son héritier mâle le tuera et épousera sa femme. Andronic est de même averti de sa chute par un oracle. Un démon, invoqué à la demande d'un sorcier, montre de manière oblique dans le plan d'eau où il se loge ce qui sera[67]. On lui annonce que sa chute lui viendra d'un homme dont le nom commence par *IS*. Andronic pensait commencer une nouvelle série AIMA et avait désigné son cadet Jean contre son aîné Manuel, afin d'entamer ce nouveau cycle. Que l'oracle lui annonce que le nom de son successeur commencera bien par *iota* établit comme un lien de filiation entre les deux hommes : au lieu du jeune Jean (*Iōannis*) Comnène, le déjà trentenaire Isaac Ange succède à Andronic. De manière parfaitement détournée, un second cycle AIMA semble débuter. Selon le mythe, Laios essaye de tuer Œdipe enfant, en le confiant à un garde pour qu'il le tue ou le laisse être la proie des bêtes sauvages. Isaac Ange, qui, au début du règne d'Andronic faisait partie des aristocrates révoltés qui se réfugièrent dans Nicée et soutinrent le siège d'Andronic, est, à la capitulation de la cité, inexplicablement laissé en vie par Andronic, alors que tous les autres seigneurs sont abattus[68]. Comme Laios, Andronic est l'artisan ignorant de ses malheurs. De même, dans le mythe, le garde chargé de tuer Œdipe ne parvient pas à s'y résoudre et le confie à un berger, ce qui permet à l'oracle de s'accomplir une fois l'enfant devenu homme. Dans l'*Histoire* de Nicétas, Hagiochristophoritès, l'âme damnée d'Andronic, prend l'initiative, après l'oracle du démon, d'aller arrêter Isaac Ange : cette tentative engage Isaac à agir et permet à l'oracle de s'accomplir. Enfin, notons que, comme Laios, Andronic sera tué par cet héritier inattendu.

[66] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 311.81.
[67] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 339.10–19.
[68] Nicétas Chôniatès, *Histoire* 286.5–6.

Ces différents éléments permettent à Alexis III de prendre place dans la tragédie. En succédant à Isaac-Œdipe et en précédant Alexis IV-Polynice, Alexis III joue le rôle d'Étéocle. Le frère d'Isaac devient ainsi aussi son fils : c'est exactement le cas d'Étéocle, à la fois fils et frère d'Œdipe. Par ailleurs, Alexis III enferme Isaac II d'abord au palais, ensuite à la Péréa de la Double Colonne, comme dans les *Phéniciennes* d'Euripide, Œdipe est cloîtré dans le palais par ses fils.

CONCLUSION

L'autocitation est donc un outil de valeur triple : il est à la fois un outil référentiel – l'autocitation de Nicétas est majoritairement une citation de *topoi*[69] – , un outil narratif – il permet de composer un récit sous le récit[70] – , et un outil herméneutique – il permet de lire le récit sous-jacent[71]. D'un point de vue esthétique, l'autocitation donne une valeur poétique certaine au texte : d'un point de vue moderne, elle rejoint la remarque de Valéry sur le pouvoir de la poésie à convoquer « tout le possible du langage », celle de Jakobson sur l'autotélisme de la fonction poétique du langage[72] ; d'un point de vue ancien, elle met en exergue la place centrale de la répétition dans une civilisation de l'analogie : elle est schéma mental, garantie de beauté pour l'ouvrage littéraire et cause de plaisir pour le public[73].

Le cycle thébain des Comnènes-Anges que compose Nicétas est à la fois retour du même et inversion de la situation mythique, les éléments historiques revenant en mi-

[69] Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 243–308, notamment 275–306. Manuel II Paléologue fait de même quand il s'autocite, cf. Kuttner-Homs 2014, 111. Autociter des *topoi* est sans doute la garantie du double discours, car en étant lisse et convenu, il n'y a pas lieu de supposer qu'il s'agisse d'une clef d'accès vers un second sens, et pourtant ! cf. Kuttner-Homs à paraître a. L'historien Eunape de Sardes utilisait déjà le *topoi* pour masquer des allusions politiques, cf. Steinrück 2004, 45–47.

[70] Comme on l'a vu, ce récit sous-jacent a parfois un sens contraire à celui du récit de surface. Des remarques générales intéressantes ont été faites à ce sujet par Kristeva 1969, 127, au sujet de la littérature classique dans Sharrock 2001, au sujet de l'autocitation de sens contradictoire (les mêmes mots servent à dire deux choses opposés) dans Kuttner-Homs 2016, II, 276–89.

[71] Cette herméneutique repose sur l'interaction des textes et pourrait correspondre à ce que Kristeva appelait une « lecture paragrammatique », cf. Kristeva 1969, 113–46. En cela, le texte de Nicétas appartient à la poésie.

[72] Jakobson 1960.

[73] Le goût de la répétition (notamment des mêmes histoires) est culturellement ancré dans toutes les civilisations, à commencer par la nôtre qui dit préférer la nouveauté, cf. Hillis Miller 2004 ; Hutcheon 2006, 114–20, 172–77. Pour le plaisir du palimpseste : Hutcheon 2006, 173 ; Nilsson 2010, 205–8. Notons que la répétition est la condition de l'architecture des textes, sans laquelle il n'y aurait ni catalogue ni structures annulaires. Cf. Kuttner-Homs 2016, I, 34–39 (avec bibliographie sur ces deux modalités anciennes de constructions du texte).

roir de ces derniers. C'est la même histoire *et* une autre[74]. Tout d'abord, Isaac-Œdipe ne se crève pas les yeux lui-même, son frère et fils Alexis III-Étéocle s'en charge. Ensuite, Sophocle rapporte que Polynice est l'aîné des deux fils d'Œdipe[75] ; or Alexis IV-Polynice est plus jeune que son oncle Alexis III-Étéocle, qui est déjà l'aîné d'Isaac. Enfin, les Spartes, nés des dents du dragon semés par Cadmos et qui assurent la pérennité de la cité durant les interrègnes des Labdacides[76], sont aussi présents dans cette tragédie thébaine, mais sous une forme destructrice, puisque c'est ainsi que Nicétas nomme les nombreux usurpateurs (σπαρτοὶ γίγαντες) qui minèrent les règnes d'Isaac II et Alexis III[77]. Le temps fait donc revenir la tragédie en sens inverse : les cadets attaquent les aînés. De même, la tragédie thébaine de Nicétas comprend la victoire des Épigones : Thèbes-Constantinople tombe devant les Argiens-Latins.

L'autocitation participe d'une stratégie narrative consistant à organiser les personnages de l'*Histoire* selon un scénario déjà écrit et qui ne demande qu'à se répéter. Fidèle en ce sens à la maxime thucydidéenne qui veut que les événements historiques se répètent de manière presque semblable (παραπλησίος)[78], Nicétas a tenu à montrer que les événements terribles qui frappèrent l'Empire et qui peuvent paraître inexplicables au premier abord, ont leur parallèle dans l'histoire des Labdacides. Les réseaux secrets qui lient les personnages entre eux sont mis en évidence par les mots, et, comme nous l'avons déjà constaté, les mots qui servent à dire le bonheur servent ensuite à dire le malheur. Andronic Ier, Isaac II, Alexis III, Alexis IV jouent tous un rôle dont ils n'ont pas conscience : leur tragédie est avant tout celle de l'ignorance. Ils n'ont pas voulu voir leurs fautes et celles de leurs aïeux, alors que leur famille est marquée par le crime, les luttes fratricides, l'inceste et *in fine* la tyrannie.

La stratégie narrative mise en place par Nicétas est donc aussi une stratégie historiographique. Le « roman de Thèbes » présent dans l'Histoire vaut comme une autre histoire, mais aussi comme *approfondissement de l'Histoire*[79]. Elle vise à montrer l'ac-

[74] Nilsson 2010.

[75] Sophocle, Œd*ipe à Colone* 375. Selon une scholie à l'*Iliade* (Σ A 4, 376), une autre à Diodore de Sicile (*Schol. Diod. Sic.* 4, 65) et Euripide, *Les Phéniciennes* 69, Étéocle est l'aîné. Eschyle, dans les *Sept contre Thèbes*, laisse cette question indécise.

[76] Ainsi, lorsque Labdacos meurt, la régence est confiée à son parent Lycos, de la lignée des Spartes ; lorsque Laïos revient d'exil, il épouse Jocaste, une Sparte ; lorsqu'Étéocle et Polynice meurent, c'est Créon, le frère de Jocaste, qui assure la continuité du pouvoir.

[77] Nicétas Chôniatès, Histoire 423.7–9 ; 534.63–64.

[78] Thucydide, *La guerre de Péloponnèse* 1.143.

[79] Il n'y a donc pas ici d' « updating » de l'Histoire comme souvent dans l'historiographie byzantine, cf. Nilsson 2006 ; Nilsson & Scott 2007, mais approfondissement et amplification d'une matrice signifiante sous-jacente à l'Histoire, qui est la Littérature, cf. Riffaterre 1980 ; Riffaterre 1987. La chose est confirmée par les études spécifiques consacrées à l'historiographie byzantine, cf. Odorico & Agapitos 2006 ; Macrides 2010.

caparement de l'État par une famille, au point que la malédiction qui pèse sur elle se répercute de manière funeste sur l'Empire[80]. Déjà les *Sept contre Thèbes* mettaient en scène ce lien terrible et dangereux, en montrant qu'Étéocle confond πόλις et γένος alors que les deux entités sont, pour le démocrate qu'était Eschyle, contradictoires ; lien tragique également, puisqu'Étéocle est la fois chef de Thèbes et fils d'Œdipe, c'est-à-dire préoccupé par son rôle politique et en même temps soumis à la malédiction qui doit le balayer. Cette confusion de la famille et de l'État semble une des causes principales que Nicétas assigne au déclin de l'Empire : plutôt que de choisir les meilleurs, les Comnènes n'ont cessé de choisir ceux de leur sang, se privant, en même temps qu'ils dégénéraient, de la possibilité de sauver l'Empire.

Constantinople est au cœur des préoccupations de Nicétas et l'objet qui organise l'ensemble toutes les stratégies narratives et romanesques de Nicétas[81]. Car il s'agit bien d'un « roman de Thèbes » que Nicétas compose, et s'il est impossible de savoir si Nicétas avait lu ce roman français composé dans les années 1150–1170, il est frappant de voir combien, d'intrigues amoureuses en péripéties politiques, d'oracles funestes en coups de théâtre, de la tragédie la plus noire au comique le plus grivois, Nicétas, historien, se comporte en vrai romancier, dans la veine de ce que ses contemporains firent dans le genre du roman d'amour[82].

D'ailleurs, du point de vue de la macrostructure de l'*Histoire*, sans doute existe-il trois romans. Si le « roman de Thèbes » occupe, à bien y regarder, la seconde moitié de l'*Histoire*, la première moitié de l'ouvrage fait davantage songer à un « roman de Troie », dont les Byzantins sont aussi les perdants[83]. Dans ces deux parties, les Latins, sous leurs masques de Troyens vengeurs et d'Épigones rusés, font main basse sur Constantinople. Vue dans la perspective de l'Empire, Constantinople est une seconde Troie et son livre est l'*Iliade* ; vue dans la perspective des Comnènes-Anges, elle est une seconde Thèbes et son livre est peut-être la *Thébaïde*[84]. Entre ces deux histoires se trouve le règne d'Andronic Ier qui rejoue l'*Odyssée*, mais une *Odyssée* monstrueuse dans laquelle Ulysse continue, jusqu'à ce que la mort l'arrête, à massacrer des prétendants

[80] Lupaş & Petre 1981, 4 ; Zeitlin 1982, 29 ; Muñoz 2011, 67.

[81] Les liens entre historiographie et roman de l'ère comnène sont avérés. Cf. Nilsson & Nyström 2003 ; Bourbouhakis 2009 ; Nilsson 2014, 98–111.

[82] Nilsson 2014, 173–75.

[83] Kuttner-Homs 2014. La matière troyenne occupe de vastes pans de la littérature byzantine, cf. Nilsson 2004, et a largement inspiré les historiens médiévaux et renaissants face aux deux chutes de Constantinople ; cf. Spencer 1952 ; Runciman 1972 ; Philippides 2003 ; Philippides 2007 ; Philippides & Hanak 2011, 197–99. Les Ottomans de l'époque de Mehmet II s'inspireront même d'événements rapportés par Nicétas pour justifier la prise de la Ville, cf. Harris 2003.

[84] Ce poème est perdu, nous ne le connaissons que par des témoignages ; cf. Muñoz 2011, 42–43.

imaginaires[85]. Pour Nicétas, ces trois poèmes sont probablement liés et d'une manière qui met en évidence la haute ambition de l'*Histoire* : la tradition attribue parfois aussi la *Thébaïde* à Homère[86].

[85] Kuttner-Homs à paraître b.

[86] Paus. 9.9.5. Nos remerciements vont avant tout à I. Nilsson, dont la bienveillance, l'ouverture d'esprit et les conseils avisés nous ont permis de mener à bien ce travail. Notre gratitude va également à P. F. Sacchi pour ses suggestions de lecture et à A. Le Coz pour son amicale relecture.

RÉFÉRENCES BIBLIOGRAPHIQUES

Sources primaires

Chôniatès, Nicétas, *Discours et Lettres*. Éd. J. L. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae orationes et epistulae*. CFHB 3, Berlin and New York 1972.

——— *Histoire*. Éd. J. L. van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae historia*. CFHB 11, Berlin and New York 1975. Tr. A. Pontani and F. M. Pontani, *Niceta Coniata: Grandezza e catastrofe di Bisanzio*. Rome and Milan 1994–2014.

Sources secondaires

Ahl, F. 1985. *Metaformations: Soundplay and Wordplay in Ovid and Other Classical Poets*. Ithaca, NY and Londres.

Atasoy, S. 2003. *İstanbul Üniversitesi 550. Yıl Uluslararası Bizans ve Osmanlı Sempozyumu (XV. Yüzıl) / 550th Anniversary of the Istanbul University: International Byzantine and Ottoman Symposium (XVth century)*. Istanbul.

Beaton, R. and C. Roueché (éd.) 1993. *The Making of Byzantine History: Studies Dedicated to Donald M. Nicol on his Seventieth Birthday*. Aldershot, Hants.

Bourbouhakis, E. C. 2009. « Exchanging the devices of Ares for the delights of the Erotes: erotic misadventures and the History of Niketas Choniates », dans Nilsson (éd.) 2009, 213–34.

Bury, E. and M. Néraudeau (éd.) 2003. *Lectures d'Ovide publiées à la mémoire de J.-P. Néraudeau*. Paris.

Fitch, B. T. 1983. « L'intra-intertextualité interlinguistique de Beckett : la problématique de la traduction de soi » *Texte* 2, 85–100.

Foucher, A. 2013. *Lecture ad metrum, lecture ad sensum: études de métrique stylistique*. Bruxelles.

García Ruiz, P. 2015. « Una lectura conjunta del primer Encomio a Constancio y el Encomio a Eusebia de Juliano » *Exemplaria Classica* 19, 155–73.

Gaul, N. 2003. « Andronikos Komnenos, Prinz Belthandros und der Zyklop: Zwei Glossen zu Niketas Choniates' *Chronike Diegesis* » *BZ* 96 (2003), 623–60.

Genette, G. 1982. *Palimpsestes : la littérature au second degré*. Paris.

Grégoire, H. 1924. « Un continuateur de Constantin Manassès et sa source », dans *Mélanges offerts à M. Gustave Schlumberger*. Paris, 272–81.

Hanna, A. (éd.) 1972. *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in honor of Aziz Suryal Atiya*. Leyde.

Hénin, E. and V. Naas, à paraître. *Topoi et anecdotes artistiques : fortune, forme, fonction, de l'Antiquité au XVIIIe s*. Paris.

Hillis Miller, J. 1990. « Narrative», dans Lentricchia and McLaughlin (éd.) 1990, 70–79.

Hutcheon, L. 2006. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York and Londres.

Kaldellis, A. 2009. « Paradox, reversal and the meaning of History », dans Simpson and Efthymiadis (éd.) 2009, 75–100.

Kristeva, J. 1969. *Semioetike : recherches pour une sémanalyse*. Paris.

Kuttner-Homs, S. 2014. « Nicétas Chôniatès lecteur de lui-même : les mécanismes de l'emprunt interne dans l'œuvre d'un haut lettré byzantine » *Kentron* 30, 109–28.

——— 2016. *L'héritage de la littérature antique autoréférentielle dans l'œuvre de Nicétas Chôniatès*. Thèse de doctorat, Caen (2 vol.).

——— à paraître a. « Rhétorique des arts et art de la rhétorique : les anecdotes de peintre sculpteurs dans les Histoires de Jean Tzetzès », dans Hénin and Naas (éd.) à paraître.

——— à paraître b. « La tradition iambique dans l'Histoire de Nicétas Chôniatès comme schéma historiographique », dans Muñoz (éd.) à paraître.

Harris, J. 2000. « Distortion, divine providence and genre in Niketas Choniates' account of the collapse of Byzantium 1180–1204 » *Journal of Medieval History* 16, 19–31.

Hartog, F. 2003. *Régimes d'historicité : présentisme et expériences du temps*. Paris.

Laiou, A. 1992. *Mariage, amour et parenté à Byzance aux XIe-XIIIe siècles*. Paris.

Lentricchia, F. and T. McLaughlin (éd.) 1990. *Critical Terms for Literary Study*. Chicago and Londres.

Limat-Letellier, N. and M. Miguel-Ollagnier (éds) 1998. *L'intertextualité*. Besançon.

Ricardou, J. (éd.) 1975. *Claude Simon : analyse, théorie*. Paris.

Lupaş, L. and Z. Petre 1981. *Commentaire aux Sept contre Thèbes d'Eschyle*. Bucarest, Paris.

Macrides, R. (éd.) 2010. *Byzantine History as Literature*. SPBS 15, Farnham, Surrey and Burlington VT.

Magdalino, P. 1993a. *The Empire of Manuel I Komnenos (1143–1180)*. Cambridge, New York.

——— 1993b. « The history of the future and its uses: prophecy, policy and propaganda » dans Beaton and Roueché (éds) 1993, 3–34.

——— 2009. « Prophecy and divination in the History », dans Simpson and Efthymiadis (éd.) 2009, 59–74.

Muñoz, A.-I. 2011. *Eschyle : les Sept contre Thèbes*. Paris.

——— (éd.) à paraître. *La tradition iambique*. Nice.

Neville, L. 2012. *Heroes and Romans in Twelfth-Century Byzantium : the Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios*. Cambridge, New York and Melbourne.

——— 2013. « Families, politics and memories of Rome in the Material for History of Nikephoros Bryennios », dans Tougher and Brubaker (éd.) 2013, 359–70.

Nilsson, I. 2004. « From Homer to Hermoniakos: some considerations of Troy matter in Byzantine literature » *Troianalexandrina* 4, 9–34.

——— 2006. « To narrate the events of the past: on Byzantine historians and historians of Byzantium », in J. Burke et al. (éd.), *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*. Byz Aus 16, Melbourne, 47–58.

——— (éd.) 2009. *Plotting with Eros: Essays on the Poetics of Love and the Erotics of Reading*. Copenhague.

——— 2010. « The same story, but another: a reappraisal of literary imitation in Byzantium », dans Rhoby and Schiffer (éd.) 2010, 195–208.

——— 2014. *Raconter Byzance : la littérature au XIIe siècle*. Séminaires byzantins 3, Paris.

Nilsson, I. and E. Nyström 2003. « To compose, read and use a Byzantine text : aspects of the Chronicle of Constantine Manasses » *BMGS* 33/1, 42–60.

Nilsson, I. and R. Scott, 2007. « Towards a new history of Byzantine literature: the case of historiography » *Classica et Mediaevalia* 58, 319–32.

Odorico, P., P. A. Agapitos and M. Hinterberger (éd.), 2006. *L'écriture de la mémoire : la littérarité de l'historiographie*. Paris.

Philippides, M. 2003. « History repeats itself: ancient Troy and Renaissance Istanbul », dans Atasoy (éd.) 2003, 41–68.

——— 2007. « The Fall of Constantinople (1453): classical comparisons and the circle of cardinal Isidore » *Viator* 38/1, 349–83.

——— & W. Hanak, 2011. *The Siege and Fall of Constantinople in 1453: Historiography, Topography and Military Studies*. Farnham, Surrey.

Rakotoelina, F. 2006. « Le signalement de l'auto-citation dans les discours scientifiques : le cas des sciences de l'information et de la communication » *Travaux de linguistique* 52, 101–13.

Riffaterre, M., 1980. « Syllepsis » *Critical Inquiry* 6/4, 625–38.

——— 1987. « The Intertextual Unconscious » *Critical Inquiry* 13/2, 371–82.

Rhoby, A. and E. Schiffer (éd.) 2010. *Imitatio - Aemulatio - Variatio : Akten des internationalen wissenschaftlichen Symposions zur byzantinischen Sprache und Literatur (Wien, 22.-25. Oktober 2008)*. Vienne.

Runciman, S. 1972. « Teucri and Turci » dans Hanna (éd.) 1972, 344–48.

Saussure, Ferdinand de 2013 [1906]. *Anagrammes homériques*. Éd. P.-Y. Testenoire. Limoges.

Saxey, R. 2009. « The Homeric metamorphoses of Andronikos I Komnenos », dans Simpson and Efthymiadis (éd.) 2009, 121–43.

Sharrock, A. (éd.) 2001. *Intratextuality: Greek and Roman Textual Relations*. Oxford.

Simpson, A. 2006. « Before and after 1204: the versions of Niketas Choniates' Historia » *DOP* 60, 189–221.

——— 2013. *Niketas Choniates : A Historiographical Study*. Oxford.

Simpson, A. and S. Efthymiadis (éd.) 2009. *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer.* Genève.

Spencer, T. 1952. « Turks and Trojans in the Renaissance » *Modern Language Review* 47, 330–33.

Steinrück M. 2004. *Haltung und rhetorische Form: Tropen, Figuren und Rhythmus in der Prosa des Eunap von Sardes*. Hidelsheim, Zurich and New York.

Testenoire P.-Y. 2013. *Ferdinand de Saussure à la recherche des anagrammes*. Limoges.

Tougher S. and L. Brubaker 2013. *Approaches to the Byzantine Family*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VA.

Tronchet, G. 2003. « Ovide lecteur d'Ovide », dans Bury and Néraudeau 2003, 51–78.

Vassilikopulou-Ioannidou, A. 1969–1970. « Ανδρονικός ο Κομνηνός και Οδυσσεύς » *ΕΕΒΣ* 37 (1969–1970), 251–59.

Wright, M. 2012. *The Comedian as Critic: Greek Old Comedy and Poetics*. Londres.

Zeitlin, F. 1982. *Under the Sign of the Shield: Semiotics and Aeschylus' Seven Against Thebes*. Rome.

14

ANDRONIKOS I KOMNENOS IN CHONIATES' HISTORY: A TRICKSTER NARRATIVE?

Tomasz Labuk

SHOULD A LIST of the most elusive, disquieting and complex characters in Byzantine literature ever be made, Andronikos I Komnenos would most probably be placed at the very top. It seems impossible to escape from being simultaneously fascinated by the amazing tales of his heroic feats and being appalled by the sheer volume of evil perpetrated by his own hands. His turbulent biography is known thanks to numerous Byzantine, Western, Bulgarian and Serbian accounts,[1] the most complex and famous being that by Niketas Choniates in his *History*. Estrangement and confusion seem to be the terms which best describe the first reaction to Choniates' biography of Andronikos. It is an extraordinary mixture of contradictory elements which stirs the most extreme feelings in the reader – one wavers constantly between deep admiration, puzzlement and utter distaste. Every detail seems to be out of joint here. Should Andronikos be admired for his warlike spirit, noble stature and attempts to cleanse the state of deeply-rooted pathologies or despised for his bloodthirstiness, fickleness of nature and utter immorality?

To be sure, Choniates constructed Andronikos's literary biography building on earlier material, chiefly Eustathios's account of the capture of Thessalonike by the Normans. Yet, by no means did he copy his ideas blindly.[2] As Niels Gaul has demonstrated on the basis of the manuscript tradition of the *History*, Andronikos's character-build-

[1] A comprehensive list of scholarly literature on the reign of Andronikos is present in Simpson 2013, 158 n. 95. For Simpson's own historiographical and literary analysis of Andronikos's reign in the *History,* see ibid., 158–70.

[2] As Gaul (2003, 644) has remarked: "Nun ist zunächst anzumerken, daß Choniates sein literarisches Spiel nicht aus dem Nichts schuf [...]". The relationship between Eustathios's work and Andronikos's biography in the *History* is further discussed in detail by Gaul 2003, 648–53. As a matter of fact, Choniates might have answered to the call of Eustathios. In one of the passages in his *Capture* Eustathios states that a "young tongue" is required to recount all the evils perpetrated by Andronikos (52.10–13: γλώττης δεῖται νεανικῆς φράζειν). Later on, Eustathios decides only to outline (ὁμαλῶς λέξαι) the events related to Andronikos, as their in-depth treatment would re-

ing was a long process that lasted for years, or even decades. As the thirteenth-century manuscript of the *History* (Par. gr. 1778) attests, Choniates gave the final touches to Andronikos's biography after the catastrophe of 1204, during his voluntary exile in Nicaea.[3] This lengthy process of reworking and developing resulted in an extremely intricate and paradoxical literary character.

The complexity of Choniates' literary creation has already attracted ample attention from Byzantinists. Diverse interpretative frameworks have been proposed over the years by scholars and numerous literary tropes have been singled out in the literary character of Andronikos. Agne Vasilikopoulou was the first modern scholar to acknowledge close parallels between Andronikos and Odysseus, while more recently Alicia Simpson has recognized that Choniates also reused Diodorus Siculus's material on Agathocles in his creation of Andronikos's literary portrait. Niels Gaul has discerned that Andronikos should be understood as a pair (or pairs) of binary opposites, among which the Odysseus-Polyphemus dichotomy plays the most prominent role. Building on Gaul's theses, Roderick Saxey has argued that the basic narrative pattern in the story of Andronikos comes down to the presentation of a "true-to-himself" Andronikos-Odysseus and an "enemy-self" of Andronikos-anti-Odysseus.

Since the times of Charles Diehl Andronikos has been perceived as a prototypical romance hero: a Byzantine Don Juan, a vigorous lover, an adventurer and a heroic warrior. Emmanuel Bourbouhakis has aptly argued that Andronikos's heroic adventures and love affairs adapt motifs specific to Komnenian novels, whereas Niels Gaul has demonstrated motifs shared by the episodes of Andronikos's exiles and a later Byzantine romance *Belthandros and Chrysantza*. On top of that, other scholars have pointed out that the story of Andronikos can be comprehended as tragedy, or that it follows various literary traditions of epic-comic, panegyric and invective.[4]

While these cannot be doubted, none of the above-mentioned frameworks seems to have dealt in full with the peculiarity and strangeness of Andronikos's biography. Anthony Kaldellis is a prominent exception to this rule. He was the only scholar to recognize conscious authorial contradictions in the narrative, arguing that paradox and

quire a work of greater length (μὴ καὶ πλατὺ μάλα βιβλιογραφήσειν ἀνάγκην εὑρήσω): Eustathios, *Capture of Thessalonike* 56.6–10.

3 For Par. gr. 1778 and the process of creating the portrait of Andronikos see Gaul 2003, 638 n. 63 and 657–58. Also see van Dieten 1994.

4 Vasilikopoulou 1969/70, Simpson 2013a, 259–68; Gaul 2003, Saxey 2009. Magoulias 2011, has argued that Choniates' narrative of Andronikos conforms to Aristotle's theory of tragedy; novelistic and romance elements of Choniates' narrative have been discussed by Diehl (1908, 88–132) and more recently by Bourbouhakis (2009) as well as Gaul (2003). The theory of *decorum* in relation to Andronikos has been discussed by Saxey 2009.

the overturning of τάξις are leitmotifs of Andronikos's biography in the *History*.[5] While Kaldellis's argument is compelling, I contend that a slightly different reading is possible – a reading which fully endorses the experimental character of Choniates' literary creation and accepts Andronikos as "a man who opposed the natural order of things".[6] Confronted with the task of narrating one of the bloodiest reigns in the history of the Empire, and in an attempt to reconcile antithetical traits of Andronikos, Choniates created a character which resembles closely a mythical trickster type.[7]

Trickster narratives seem to be the most primordial forms and structures of storytelling, inextricably connected to our civilization since its very beginning.[8] The term "trickster" was popularized by those anthropologists who applied it originally to a number of mythical characters present in the stories of autochthonic populations of the Americas and Africa. Soon it was discovered that similar mythological types could be found in almost any place and period of human history.[9]

Various frameworks have been proposed in order to present the systematic study of trickster narratives. Harold Scheub, Barbara Babcock-Abrahams and William Hynes[10] enumerate ambiguity and multiformity as the essential features of tricksters. Trickster-

[5] Kaldellis 2009. In his wake, Chaffins 2011 has argued that the paradoxical nature of Andronikos can only be understood by recognizing the tyrant as a Proteus. However, the "fluidity" of Proteus is limited merely to his form, see John Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 2.44. Andronikos is not the only person to be likened to Proteus in the *History*, cf. Niketas Choniates, *History* 62.13–63.12 (with reference to Michael Italikos) and 489.47–49 (with reference to Constantine Mesopotamites). Both references equate Proteus with Odyssean πολυμηχανία and ποικιλία, here referring rather to Odyssean ability to adapt to the situation.

[6] Niketas Choniates, *History* 321.10–11: ἄνδρος τῇ φύσει τῶν πραγμάτων ἀντιμαχομένου.

[7] It is not my intention to argue that it was Choniates' original intention to create a trickster character, or a trickster story. These concepts were, of course, unknown to him, hence my point is only to suggest that Andronikos's biography can be, from a modern perspective, read and understood as a trickster story. After all, Choniates was a part of Greek tradition, which created at least three conspicuous tricksters: Odysseus (who is one of Andronikos's guises), Hermes, and Proteus (for this see n. 10 below).

[8] Scheub 2012, 5–28. Also Doty & Hynes 1993, 13–32.

[9] The field was inaugurated by Brinton 1868. Kerenyi 1956 has pointed out numerous close parallels between the North American tricksters and the Greek figures of Hermes, Prometheus/Epimetheus, or Heracles/Dionysus known from Aristophanes' *Frogs*; for Hermes' contradictory trickster traits see also Doty 1993. The popularity of a trickster mythologem has flourished since then: Andrews 2009 has discerned numerous elements of trickster narratives in the *Old Testament*, other scholars have traced their presence in Homer's *Odyssey* (Scheub 2012, 136–47), in the late antique *Life of Aesop* and *Life of Alexander* (Jouanno 2009, 33–48), in Middle American folktales which revolve around the person of Saint Peter (Hynes & Steele 1993), or even in modern outsiders known from the movies such as *Easy Rider* and others (Babcock-Abrahams 1975, 164).

[10] Scheub 2012, 5–28; Babcock-Abrahams 1975; Hynes 1993.

ish characters "move easily and readily through the variety of experiences".[11] They are indeterminate shape-shifters, always composed of binary opposites as culture/nature, life/death, sacred/profane, order/chaos or fertility/impotence, male/female. Tricksters are always outsiders – they are amoral and asocial. Notorious for their outspokenness, they are aggressive, resentful, vain and deficient of authority. They frequently show physical or mental abnormality – being in the liminal betwixt-and-between state, they exhibit an exaggerated sexual character and an enormous libido. Tricksters constantly deceive and mislead in order to achieve their petty aims. Being 'the comedy of the grotesque', they are often involved in scatological episodes. Last but not least, the trickster is a 'situation inventor', who possesses the ability to reverse any possible order or situation – he is, in other words, a living personification of chaos.

With these in mind, in what follows I shall discuss both tricksterish characteristics of Andronikos and narrative patterns peculiar to trickster stories which are, as I shall attempt to show, present in Choniates' work. Secondly, I shall conclude by setting Andronikos's biography in the *History* against the roles and the functions of trickster narratives which might offer some new interpretative insights into Choniates' account.

ANDRONIKOS AS A 'LIMINAL BEING'

One of the most persistent features of tricksters is their liminality and paradoxical multiformity which render them physically impossible.[12] The trickster, who is always composed of polar opposites, can assume any shape and form; however, as Hynes remarks, "the trickster is always more than can be glimpsed at any one place or in any one embodiment".[13] To be sure, Choniates acknowledges this liminality and contradictory nature of Andronikos. Explicitly alluding to Eustathios's *Capture of Thessalonike*, Niketas characterizes the tyrant as a livid and arrogant (ἀγέρωχος) man, a spotted, grizzled and changeful chameleon.[14] A double-entendre in which Choniates engages here

[11] Scheub 2012, 10.

[12] At the same time all of Andronikos's 'paradoxical' features are modalities of Byzantine and ancient Greek invective as well as Byzantine Kaiserkritik, for which see Tinnefeld 1971, esp. 158–79; Magdalino 2007; Baldwin 1982 and Garland 1990. However, I should not like to dwell on this well-researched area of Byzantine literary culture. The aim of my analysis is to show how Choniates infused the literary character of Andonikos with so many antithetical features that he can be understood as a 'tricksterish' character.

[13] Hynes 1993, 35.

[14] Eustathios, *Capture of Thessalonike* 15–16. An interesting identification of the chameleon's features and their proximity to Satan as well as reasons for the chameleon changing its skin colour is present for instance in Michael Glykas, *Chronicle* 119.7–14, cf. Manuel Philes, *Carmina varia de naturali historia* 1.1261–78.

is indeed interesting. Self-contradiction is inherent in the adjective ἀγέρωχος, which, as is well attested to in John Tzetzes' ninth *Chilias*, could be used as both moral praise and censure. The term denotes either an honourable or an arrogant man.[15] Ποικίλος, moreover, carries the connotations of changeability and instability.[16]

From this perspective, it might be asserted that such volatility forms one of the pivotal character-building motifs in Choniates' narrative. Andronikos assumes varied and contradictory roles as the story unfolds: from human to a wild beast, from godly to ungodly, from being the giver of life to the all-devouring death, from cunning Odysseus to foolish Polyphemus. He is all of them and none of them at the very same time; his ποικιλία renders him elusive and impossible to grasp.[17]

Already in the *Capture of Thessalonike*, Eustathios likens Andronikos to a "primal matter" (ἀρχέγονον ὕλην), which could assume shapes of every form. He calls Andronikos a versatile man (πολύστροφος, παμποίκιλος), presents him as a union of multifarious elements, and even likens him to Proteus of Pharos (Πρωτεὺς δὲ μᾶλλον).[18] Inspired by Eustathios's material, Choniates clearly identifies Andronikos as a protean being in the *History*.[19] However, in Choniates' narrative Andronikos does not seem to be simply double-natured (διφυής), changeful (ποικίλος) or merely resemble multi-formed Proteus. It is a conglomeration of all these traits that forms the very essence of the literary character of the tyrant in the *History*. To adapt Karl Kroeber's words, Andronikos as trickster "transforms, or deconstructs, any definition of him even as he provokes one into making a definition."[20] From this vantage point, then, Andronikos in the *History* can be also perceived as an extreme embodiment of μῆτις (a man of deceit, cunning, ploys, tricks and skilfulness).[21] As Marcel Detienne and Jean-Pierre Vernant have shown in their study, those who are characterized by μῆτις bear "a complex of

[15] John Tzetzes, *Chiliades* 9.257.108–14.

[16] Pontani 1994, 311 and Magoulias 1984, 195 translate it as "multicoloured". For the meaning of the adjective see LSJ.

[17] According to Plato, *Republic* 568d, a being characterized by ποικιλία is "never the same as itself" (ποικίλον καὶ οὐδέποτε ταὐτόν) and is a polar opposite of ἁπλοῦς. Lexika connect the word to rapid change and violent movement (Detienne & Vernant 1978, 19).

[18] Eustathios, *Capture of Thessalonike* 15.32–16.4: καὶ μάλιστα ὁ Ἀνδρόνικος, παντοδαπὸς ἐκεῖνος ἄνθρωπος καὶ παμποίκιλος, καὶ [...] Πρωτέως δὲ μᾶλλον. Ὁ δ' αὐτὸς [...] κατὰ τὴν ἀρχέγονον ἀνείδεον ὕλην ἅπασιν ὑποτέθειτο εἴδεσι πολυειδῶς, ὧν τὰ μὲν ἐπαινοῖτο, τὰ δ' οὐκ ἄν.

[19] Niketas Choniates, *History* 245.78–79: ὁρῶν τὸν πολύμορφον Πρωτέα καὶ τυραννικὸν τὸν τρόπον Ἀνδρόνικον.

[20] Kroeber 1979, 78.

[21] Andronikos is characterized as πολύμητις thrice by Choniates in 106.1, 253.94 and 348.75.

appearances", are always inconstant, changing and adapting to fluid situations which combine opposite forces and features.[22]

ANDRONIKOS-TRICKSTER: ANIMALITY/MONSTROSITY

Although Andronikos, just like other tricksters, does not alter his actual form in Choniates' narrative, he is likened throughout the narrative to various wild beasts and monstrous beings. In so doing, Choniates again developed significantly Eustathian material. In the *Capture of Thessalonike* Eustathios occasionally emphasizes beastly and frightful guises of Andronikos (θηριωδία, θήρ, κατὰ Ἔμπουσα).[23] Choniates builds on these ideas and transforms bestiality into one of the major tropes of Andronikos's character-building. This, however, requires one more caveat. It must be also borne in mind in mind that animal discourse was deeply embedded in Byzantine rhetoric of political praise and critique. Yet, Choniates goes far beyond the traditional representations of emperors as animals: in his literary portrait, Andronikos possesses simultaneously various, at times contradictory, traits specific to numerous animals.

Therefore, during a duel in Cilicia, the future tyrant slips away from the hands of the enemies like a slippery eel (138.23). At another time he is likened to a wild beast (139.55: ὁ θὴρ, or 288.55: ὡς ἀρχικὸς θὴρ ἀπόσιτος). On at least three occasions his behaviour is equated to that of a horse.[24] The animal side of Andronikos-trickster shows itself as a result of his uncontrolled anger. Hence, the patriarch Theodosios berates Andronikos for his dog-like fawning (253.89–91), and does not wish to enrage a wild beast in the tyrant (254.14). In the course of the siege of Nicaea, maddened by the ineptitude of his soldiers, Andronikos is hungering like a dog (283.23: λιμώττων δὲ ὡς κύων), and resembles a confused bear (283.24: ἠπορημένη ἄρκτος).[25] While purging the court of supporters of the old regime, he is mad with fury like "a maltreated solitary wild animal" (266.24: ὡς μονιὸς διαλυμαίνεται ἄγριος). In other instances, the tyrant-trickster is likened to a serpent (248.74: ὄφις); he acts in the manner of wild beasts (268.59: ἀγριαίνειν) and reveals his blood-eating soul (269.94: αἱμοβόρον ψυχήν).[26]

[22] Detienne & Vernant 1978, 18–20; "the many-coloured shimmering nature of [the goddess] Metis is a mark of its kinship with the divided, shifting world of multiplicity within which it operates; *mētis*: cunning, deceit, operating through disguise" (ibid. 20).

[23] For these and other paradoxical features of Andronikos in Eustathios's account see *Capture of Thessalonike* 15.30–16.8.

[24] Niketas Choniates, *History* 141.88: ὡς ἵππος θηλυμανής (cf. Jer 5:8: ἵπποι θηλυμανεῖς ἐγενήθησαν, ἕκαστος ἐπὶ τὴν γυναῖκα τοῦ πλησίον αὐτοῦ ἐχρεμέτιζον); 243.37: ὡς ἵππος σταδιευτής; 269.83: ἵππος θερμός.

[25] Biblical quotation from Hos 13:8.

[26] The adjective αἱμοβόρος is regularly used with reference to carnivorous animals.

At times the bipolar pairs of contradictions in Andronikos shift: animal/human alters to monstrous/human. The Odysseus/Polyphemus dichotomy present in the tyrant's character has already been discussed by Niels Gaul.[27] Throughout the narrative Andronikos assumes other inhuman guises: seeing that the city of Nicaea cannot be easily captured by siege, he figuratively "breathes forth the Typhonian fire" (281.57–8: ἐκπυρηνίζων ἄσθμα Τυφώνειον). Choniates operates here with a well-known mythical image. Typhon was one of the most frightful monster in Greek mythology. In the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*, he is described as being neither like men, nor like gods,[28] while in Hesiod's *Theogony* Typhon is depicted as a beast of one hundred heads, whose eyes gaze with fire and whose mouths emit a cacophony of sounds.[29] This monstrous side of Andronikos's nature is at times recognized by those who encounter him. The aforementioned patriarch Theodosios notices the tyrant's gorgon gaze (252.82: γοργὸν βλέμμα),[30] the inhabitants of Chele are reported to have been "no less frightened by the unarmed beast (θῆρα γυμνὸν) and they cowered in fear through the sight of him [scil. Andronikos] alone".[31]

ANDRONIKOS-TRICKSTER: THE LIFE/DEATH DICHOTOMY

Nonetheless, the paradoxical polarity of the human/animal and human/monstrous guises of Andronikos is merely one aspect of a much more complex literary construction. Andronikos-trickster sometimes plays the roles of life-giver and death-bringer. Hence, just like other tricksters, he seems to "reset the line between life and death".[32] To be sure, Andronikos does not miss any chance to beget progeny. Attempting to rescue his own wife, Theodora, from prison, he engages in sexual relations with her in the cell, which results in the birth of their son, John. Subsequently, during the exile at the

[27] In his perceptive analysis Gaul 2003 shows in detail how Choniates operated these two paradoxical roles and how they contribute to the dramaturgy of the narrative. He also discusses the twelfth-century literary context out of which Choniates' characterization of Andronikos as Polyphemus emerged.

[28] *Hymn to Apollo* 351–52.

[29] Hesiod, *Theogony* 823–35.

[30] This could probably be a pun not only on Andronikos's monstrosity, but also effeminacy. As the anonymus *Physiologus* 23 attests, gorgons were deemed to have the faces of beautiful whores who lured their victims and killed them with their gaze. Feminine roles of Andronikos are discussed in more detail below.

[31] Niketas Choniates, *History* 348.65–66: τὸν γὰρ θῆρα καὶ γυμνὸν οὐδὲν ἔλαττον ἐδεδίεσαν καὶ πρὸς μόνην τὴν ἐκείνου θέαν κατέπτησσον.

[32] Hynes 1993, 40. Karlin-Hayter 1987 has already argued that Andronikos's literary presentation can be identified with the Grim Reaper.

court of Saltuq he conceives with her two of their offspring: another son, Alexios, and a daughter Irene (142.28–30).

At other times, however, Andronikos assumes the role of Death. This can be gleaned from Choniates' exploration of Andronikos's tyrannical δημοβορία.[33] Niketas states overtly that Andronikos considered that a day on which he did not eat the flesh of someone or put out the lights of his body was wasted (323.68–70). The tyrant-trickster "devours" a dissenting general Lapardas, who fears that the wide-yawning jaw (εὐρυχανδῆ γένυς) of Andronikos will swallow him one day (277.48–51). Correspondingly, a certain Mamalos is served up as a dessert for the jaws of Andronikos (278.76–79: ταῖς γνάθοις τοῦ Ἀνδρονίκου). A fat court official George Dishypatos would have ended up being roasted like a pig and eaten by the tyrant had Andronikos not been checked by one of his henchmen (312.15–20). During the purge in the palace, the μεγιστάνοι clearly see that the Cyclopean feast occurs before their very eyes (266.17–18).[34]

Certainly, Choniates uses this motif only figuratively: Niels Gaul, discussing it in the context of Eustathios's *Parekbolai on the Odyssey*, has noted that Andronikos's γνάθοι are in fact the jaws of the people-eating Polyphemus.[35] However, in the biblical tradition the mouth and jaws were regularly associated with the insatiable appetite of Death/Sheol/Hades.[36] Prov 27:20 states that neither Hades nor destruction is ever satisfied.[37] Similarly, the motif of the insatiable appetite of death and Hades is present in Hab 2:15.[38] The *topos* of the jaws of insatiable death was, by extension, widely used by Byzantine authors. Ephraem the Syrian in his *Sermo* paints the image of Christ who crushes the all-devouring Hades and the jaws of the Devil.[39] Analogous imagery

33 A word taken from the *Iliad* 1.225–31 (here meaning 'greedy'), which constitutes one of the main themes of the *History*. See John II's speech in Niketas Choniates, *History* 43.59–70; in Andronikos's case δημοβορία was taken very literally by Choniates. Furthermore, as Worman 2008, 29–30 suggests, Agamemnon's δημοβορία is driven by his belly.

34 A similar motif appears in Choniates' ninth *Oratio* (IX.89.3–20), addressed to Isaac II Angelos, where the emperor is praised for having saved the city from being swallowed (κατάποσις) in a Cyclopean feast (δαῖτα Κυκλώπειον) by the flesh-eating (κρεοβόρῳ) Andronikos. For a discussion of this motif see Gaul 2003, 650–653.

35 Gaul 2003, 650–51; Eustathios, *Parekbolai on Homer's Odyssey* 343.1–5. While this cannot be doubted, in the *Odyssey* γνάθοι are more generally associated with cannibalistic behaviour or violent consumption, for this see Homer, *Odyssey* 20.347–48; 18.28–29.

36 James & Eastmond 2007, 179–80. The image of the entrance to Hell became a widely-used iconographic motif in medieval art both in western and eastern Europe. For a discussion of its use in medieval Britain see Schmidt 1995.

37 Prov 27:20: ᾄδης καὶ ἀπώλεια οὐκ ἐμπίμπλανται.

38 Hab 2:15: ὅς ἐπλάτυνε καθὼς ᾄδης τὴν ψυχὴν αὐτοῦ καὶ οὗτος ὡς θάνατος οὐκ ἐμπιπλάμενος.

39 Ephraem the Syrian, *Sermo in pretiosam et vivificam crucem* 135.4–6: Ἐν τούτῳ τῷ ἁγίῳ ὅπλῳ διέρρηξε Χριστὸς τὴν παμφάγον τοῦ ᾄδου γαστέρα καὶ τὸ πολυμήχανον τοῦ Διαβόλου ἐνέφραξε

appears at least twice in Eustathios's *Capture of Thessalonike*.[40] Thus, it might be safely stated that by exploring this theme Choniates presents Andronikos as an embodiment of death.

ANDRONIKOS-TRICKSTER: THE MALE/FEMALE ROLES DICHOTOMY

As Dean Andrews has noticed the trickster is always a "fool overcome by his voracious appetite – both gastronomical and sexual".[41] He scours the world with the sole intention of satisfying his basest desires. Inasmuch as the unruly erotic urge is considered, Andronikos is not at all different from other trickster figures.[42] The ghastly sexual appetite of the tyrant-trickster is also inextricably linked to his gender-role changes.[43]

The first gender-role reversal can be encountered in the early days of the tyrant-to-be, in the course of the reign of Manuel I Komnenos. Andronikos lies in a tent in the embraces of his cousin's daughter Eudokia. Eudokia's kin, angered at her lover, encircle the tent, intending to seize him. For a moment gender roles seem to be changed: just before the episode Choniates praises Andronikos's ἀνδρεία (104.45); but now Eudokia assumes the male role of a brave and quick-witted hero.[44] At first, Andronikos is convinced, but he refuses this plan very quickly – he has no intention of meeting his death in womanish clothes (105.63–66). Later on, in 1166, after a significant victory in Cilicia, Andronikos loses his manliness again. Now he gives himself to the pleasures of love with Philippa, the daughter of Raymond of Poitiers (138.28–140.81). He devotes his entire attention to wantonness (τρυφαῖς): he walks through the street with effeminate bodyguards, wears tight-fitting womanish clothes and, as a result of this, he loses his manliness.[45]

στόμα. Similarly, Theodore Prodromos, *Epigram in Matt.* 231.a: Ναί, λὰξ ἐνάλλου τῷ θανάτῳ, Χριστέ μου· / ναί, πλῆττε τὴν ἄπληστον Ἅδου γαστέρα, / ἕως ἂν οὓς πέπωκεν ἐξαναπτύσῃ.

[40] Eustathios, *Capture of Thessalonike* 129.20–22: καὶ οἱ μὲν θανάτῳ κατεσπάσθημεν, οἱ δὲ, τοῦ Ἅιδου στόμα συγκλείσαντος οἷς, οἶμαι, κεκόρεστο, ἡμιθνῆτες ἐμείναμεν; see also 112.27. For the association of death with devouring and swallowing in the *History*, see Niketas Choniates, *History* 70.25–27; 80.42.

[41] Andrews 2009, 9.

[42] As opposed to other tricksters, Andronikos is not gluttonous, notwithstanding his δημοβορία. Niketas Choniates, *History* 351.59–60.

[43] For the equation of lack of self-control and femininity in Byzantium, see for instance Neville 2016, 16–30, and Grünbart 2016.

[44] Niketas Choniates, *History* 105.54–55: ἦν δὲ κἀκείνη δραστήριον τὸ φρονεῖν, οὐμενοῦν κατὰ γυναῖκας πλουτούσῃ τὴν σύνεσιν.

[45] Niketas Choniates, *History* 139.52–53.

The gender role of Andronikos shifts once more after the fall of Thessalonike. First, Choniates mocks the tyrant for not being manly enough to scare away the foreigners.[46] Then Andronikos's effeminacy manifests itself vividly – he entertains himself with Dionysiac orgies and is mad with desire for sexual intercourse (322.33–4: φιλότητι μαργαίνων). He also attempts to imitate Heracles, yet in his female role now, he lacks the necessary strength and needs to restore his sexual power: [47] the lewd trickster consumes a repulsive and inedible Nilotic animal and puts some ointment on his genitals.

The ultimate gender-role change occurs in the episode which appears towards the end of the narrative when the tyrant, having failed in his last Odyssean-like escape, is seized and bound in a boat together with his women helpers (348.73–349.92). Seeing no sword to perform manly action, he apes tragedy (ὑποκρίνεται τραγῳδίαν) and sings his mournful lament (θρηνῶδες ᾄδει) in chorus with the women prisoners. However, his womanly Siren-cries are sung in vain and do not buy him the anticipated freedom (349.90: κατὰ Σειρῆνας ἐμελῴδει γυναικωδῶς).[48]

THE "TRICKSTER BOX"

Discussing the trickster narratives in the *Pentateuch*, Andrews has remarked that deception is one of its primary motifs, which moves its plot forward.[49] The statement is equally true about Andronikos's narrative in the *History*. The trickisterish hero is consistently depicted as a liar, cheat, dissembler or pretender – he uses his "trickster box" in order to get what he wants.[50] The term itself was coined by Harold Scheub who noticed that the "box" is one of the most important clusters of trickster narratives. In order to achieve his petty aims, the trickster devises a scheme, fabricates a false identity in which he leads his dupe to believe that he is what he is not. Having gained what he wants, the trickster gets away unnoticed, while the dupes do not realise that they have been tricked (and even if they do, it is already too late).[51]

In the first escape episode, Andronikos pretends to be ill (129.31: πλάττεται τὸν νοσοῦντα), and a boy is summoned to take care of him. The youngster forges the keys to

[46] Niketas Choniates, *History* 321.12–13: οὐκ ἦν ἀρρενούμενος καὶ πᾶσαν μηχανὴν μετιών, ὅπως ἀποσοβήσειε τὸ ἀλλόγλωττον.

[47] Andronikos is also compared to the effeminate Heracles who served as a slave to Omphale: Niketas Choniates, *History* 139.40–41.

[48] For a discussion of this passage, see esp. Kaldellis 2009, 85–86.

[49] Andrews 2009, 40. Andronikos as deceiver frequently assumes his Odyssean guise in the narrative, Vasilikopoulou 1969/70.

[50] Again, Choniates developed a motif already present in Eustathios's *Capture of Thessalonike* 28.10–14; 32.5; 36.6–29; 38.10–13; 41.28–42.8; 48.23–32.

[51] Scheub 2012, 24.

the cell and brings him ropes and balls of thread hidden in some food amphorae. Once the cell is open, Andronikos lets himself down by using the cords and hides from his pursuers, he takes a boat but is immediately caught by the guards. Then the trickster manages to evade the prison once again thanks to his inborn wit (130.63: νῦν δὲ ἡ οἰκεία εὐτραπελία). He pretends to be a household slave, who escapes his bonds after many years of servitude; he names Chrysochoopolos, the owner of the boat, as his master; and speaks in some barbarian language, pretending (πλαττομένος) not to know any Greek. Chrysochoopolos plays the game: he admits that Andronikos is indeed his slave and simultaneously bribes the guards. In this way Andronikos dupes the soldiers and gets away scot free (129.28–130.82).

A similar pattern is followed in the story of another escape. On his way to Galitza (Galič), Andronikos is taken captive by the Vlachs, where he performs another trick (ἀπάτην). He pretends (πλασάμενος) to suffer from gastroenteritis and frequently stops to defecate (ἐξέκλινεν εἰς ἀπόπατον παρασκευαζόμενος). One night he goes to the side, plants his staff (which he purportedly used to support himself), puts his cloak around it and plants his hat on it, making it look like a man who is kneeling in order to defecate. When the guards realise what has happened it is already too late. Only then do they realise that they have been tricked (131.88–89 ὡς δ' ὀψέ ποτε τὸν δόλον ἐκεῖνοι ἔγνωσαν).

Again, after his numerous exiles and adventures Andronikos attempts to reconcile himself with the emperor Manuel.[52] The trickster hangs a heavy chain on his neck, hides it behind his cloak and approaches the emperor. Of course, Manuel is unable to detect the chain – at once Andronikos, playing out the role of a suppliant, stretches out on the floor, begs the emperor for forgiveness and sheds tears. Manuel, astounded by this act, is himself moved to tears (227.95), and orders his attendants to raise up Andronikos. But the trickster tries even a more theatrical gesture:[53] he refuses to stand up unless he is dragged up by his chain and dashed to the ground under the imperial throne (227.96–99). The emperor has been lured into the trickster box twice: Andronikos achieves his aim and is finally pardoned.

During the co-coronation ceremony Andronikos-trickster once more assumes his theatrical guise so that he might receive the much-desired crown. When he enters the palace, it is for the first time that the people see him "in good cheer" (διαχυθείς) and

> [...] the wild beast, having altered the grimness of its gaze, promised a change in the affairs of the state for the better to many of those who were in need. But this was a manifest masquerade

[52] This "trickster box" episode is introduced by the mention of Andronikos's resourcefulness (226.86: πολυμήχανος), hence Andronikos assumes again Odyssean guise, for this see Vasilikopoulou 1969/70 and Gaul 2003.

[53] The theatrical traits of the trickster have been discussed by Scheub 2012, 24.

> and a false announcement of a cheat (ἀπατεῶνος),[54] and the merriness of his face which gave signs of the simplest humanity was an ephemeral appearance that overshadowed the inner bestiality.[55]

The dupes are led astray again: the very moment Andronikos has been acclaimed as a co-ruler, he casts away his theatrical mask. First, out of Andronikos's inspiration, it is questioned whether Alexios II should be emperor at all, and, shortly afterwards, Andronikos's henchmen seize the young emperor and strangle him.

Nonetheless, it happens occasionally that the foolish trickster does not manage to lure his victim into the "box". In one of the episodes Andronikos tries to fool the patriarch Theodosios Boradiotes in order to secure his support. Choniates builds here once more on a short episode recounted in Eustathios's *Capture*. He extends it significantly to two separate stories and focuses not only on Andronikos's cunning use of words, but also on his theatricality, alterity and bestiality.[56] In the first episode Andronikos approaches the patriarch and, wearing strange and foreign clothes, prostrates himself in front of Theodosios, praising him as the saviour of the emperor Alexios II (252.77–80). However, the patriarch immediately recognizes Andronikos's meddlesome and hateful nature as well as his theatrical feats,[57] and scolds him with a biblical quotation.[58] Confused and browbeaten, the trickster is able only to voice a scathing rebuke: "Behold the wicked Armenian!"[59]

THE "COMEDY OF THE GROTESQUE"

The outrageous and unsocial trickster, who resorts to deception in order to achieve his petty aims, constantly breaks social taboos and rules and possesses no moral compass. Andronikos-trickster is an outsider to the ethical boundaries of his social group and, through his passion for tyranny and the methodical killing of his subjects, he is

[54] LSJ notes that the adjective might refer to a devil as well.

[55] Niketas Choniates, *History* 272.63–66: [...] τὸ τοῦ βλέμματος ὁ θὴρ μεταθέμενος βλοσυρὸν καὶ τὴν ἐπὶ τὸ κρεῖττον τῶν πραγμάτων ἀλλοίωσιν πολλοῖς τῶν δεομένων καθυποσχόμενος. ἦν δὲ ταῦτα φενάκη πρόδηλος καὶ ψευδὴς ἐπαγγελία τοῦ ἀπατεῶνος καὶ τὸ τοῦ προσώπου ἱλαρὸν φιλανθρωπίας παρυφιστάνον ἰσχνότητα ἴνδαλμα πρόσκαιρον συσκιάζον τὴν ἔνδοθεν ἀγριότητα. All English translations from Greek are mine, unless otherwise noted. The *topos* of Andronikos's inner bestiality was taken by Choniates from Eustathios's *Capture of Thessalonike*: 53.30–34, 54.16.

[56] Eustathios, *Capture of Thessalonike* 38.18–40.7.

[57] Niketas Choniates, *History* 252.81–253.86; 253.89–90.

[58] Niketas Choniates, *History* 252.88–89: καθάπερ ἠκούσαμεν, οὕτως καὶ εἴδομεν; cf Ps. 47:9.

[59] Andronikos points here to Theodosios's purported foreign descent: Niketas Choniates, *History* 253.2.

an outsider to the role of the emperor. But it happens quite often that his outlandish behaviour stirs laughter.[60]

There is nothing that Andronikos regards as holy. When he engages in sexual intercourse with Eudokia, being notorious for his outspokenness,[61] he finds a comfortable excuse for his actions: Manuel is having an adulterous relationship with his brother's daughter, whereas in Andronikos's case it is only his cousin's child.[62] At another time, when the news of Andronikos's incestuous affair with Philippa reaches Manuel, the emperor is rendered almost speechless (140.59). Andronikos is fond of reviling (φιλολοίδορος) especially those who had deformed bodies or were guilty of wrongdoings, hence he derides Kilij Arslan as a Limping-Arslan (*Κουτζασθλάν*) (122.43–54).[63] Later on Andronikos mocks the stupidity of the Constantinopolitans: he suspends the horns of the deer in the agora under the pretence of showing his prey in the hunt, but in fact derides citizen's wives who are guilty of adultery (322.53–59). Again, visiting Manuel's tomb, Andronikos uses his wiles to get rid of witnesses and then addresses the dead emperor in an angry harangue. He promises to avenge himself on Manuel's family for all the wrongdoings he suffered from his cousin (256.45–257.71). Similarly, when the corpse of Alexios II has been brought to him, the trickster kicks the dead body, he derides the parents of the murdered emperor (274.15–20). Moreover, a wax impression of Andronikos's imperial signet is hung on a pierced ear of the dead, the headless corpse is cast down into the depths of the sea in a coffin, while the head is buried in some hole in Katabate district (274.21–29). Andronikos is so methodical in his killing that not even prominent women escape being murdered: an event which had not been witnessed in Constantinople since the reign of another tyrant Phocas, and which was never to occur again after Andronikos's reign.[64]

Yet, every now and then, his outlandish behaviour has a comic effect. For instance, when he orders the erection of a new building near the Church of the Forty Martyrs, he cannot adorn it with any representation of his noble deeds, since he has not achieved anything significant throughout his reign. Instead, he chooses to depict hunting scenes and chariot races. This seems to be used by Choniates as an allegorical depiction of Andronikos's former actions. One of the scenes portrays Andronikos who cuts the

[60] In this sense, Andronikos closely resembles the character of a jester. For tricksters as jesters see e.g. Scheub 2012, 31.

[61] Which was, in fact, one of the reason for his incarceration: Niketas Choniates, *History* 103.9: *οὐδὲν δὲ ἧττον τὸ ἐλευθεροστομεῖν ἀεὶ.*

[62] Niketas Choniates, *History* 104.85–6: *εἴπερ ὁ μὲν ἀδελφοῦ θυγατρὶ συνουσίαζεν, ὁ δ' Ἀνδρόνικος ἐξαδέλφου παιδὶ συγκατέκειτο.* Adultery is yet another trait characteristic to the tricksters, see Konstantakos 2006.

[63] For Byzantine fondness for deriding bodily deformations see Garland 1990.

[64] Runciman 1984, 16

flesh of either a deer, or a boar with his own hands and roasts it skilfully over a fire. The allusion to those whom the tyrant "ate" and "roasted" is clear enough.[65] Also, the representations on the church purportedly portray "some" young man who skilfully rides horses, uses a bow and a long sword and who flees his homeland "either because of his innate foolishness or his virtue" (δι' οἰκείαν ἀβελτηρίαν ἢ ἀρετήν).[66] Again, the foolish trickster unintentionally exposes himself to laughter and ridicule.

"FOREVER AN OUTSIDER"

Niels Gaul has convincingly shown that Choniates emplots Andronikos's exile adventures as romance narratives which follow the patterns peculiar to Komnenian novels and Palaiologan romances. However, these wanderings may also be considered as one of the building blocks of Andronikos's trickster story. Tricksters have no roots and there exists nothing which connects them to the society within which they operate. As liminal beings they have no place they can call home – they are permanent outsiders, frequently cast out from social groups.[67] A similar fate is shared by Andronikos. Throughout the earlier stages of the narrative, he is named "fugitive" (106.11: δραπέτην Ἀνδρόνικον), a wanderer, who roams the world far and wide,[68] he constantly reassumes his wanderings (141.86: ἐπαναδραμὼν δραπετεύσεις) and escapes for fear of his life.[69] Andronikos the trickster, who lives on the margins of society, is constantly isolated and exiled from it.

Since his young days Andronikos had been involved in plots against his cousin the emperor Manuel I Komnenos. His first attempts to depose Manuel end in a lengthy imprisonment which was interrupted by two attempts at escape (103.19–108.85).[70] After nine years in chains, he finally manages to flee (129.28). After a short visit to

[65] Niketas Choniates, *History* 333.56–57: αὐτὸς Ἀνδρόνικος μιστύλλων αὐτοχειρὶ κρέας ἐλάφειον ἢ κάπρου μονάζοντος καὶ ὀπτῶν περιφραδέως πυρί.

[66] Niketas Choniates, *History* 333.57–59: ἀνδρὸς πεποιθότος ἐπὶ τόξῳ καὶ ῥομφαίᾳ καὶ ἵπποις ὠκύποσι φεύγοντός τε τὴν ἐνεγκαμένην δι' οἰκείαν ἀβελτηρίαν ἢ ἀρετήν. It seems that even the traditional meaning of art was subverted by Andronikos, for which see Eastmond 1994. More recently, the portrait has been analysed by Cupane 1999 and Grünbart 2011, however no agreement has been reached so far as to the actual meaning of the representation. Grünbart 2011, 79 lists the most important interpretations along with a relevant bibliography on the subject.

[67] Scheub 2012, 34.

[68] Niketas Choniates, *History* 142.23: χώραν δ' ἐκ χώρας ἀμείβων καὶ ἡγεμόσι καὶ δυνάσταις πολυπλανής.

[69] Gaul 2003, 634 sees jealousy as the major reason for Andronikos's exiles.

[70] These miraculous escapes of Andronikos are related to his Odyssean μῆτις (cunning, craft). As Detienne and Vernant (1978, 21) have shown, μῆτις (also understood as malleability and suppleness) may also denote the ability of finding a concealed way out (πόρος).

his home in Constantinople (only to have his fetters removed), Andronikos leaves the capital immediately (130.75–77). On his way he is caught again by the Vlachs, but, as we have seen, he escapes, and reaches the city of Galitza. Once it is rumoured that Andronikos is collecting the army, Manuel decides to reconcile himself with his cousin (132.23–30).

The reconciliation does not last long. Soon Andronikos's enormous sexual appetite gets the better of him and he takes Philippa (a daughter of Raymond of Poitiers) as his mistress. Manuel, enraged with such behaviour, resolves to capture his cousin. Andronikos runs away to Jerusalem and travels far and wide to settle for some time in the court of Saltuq (142.23–35). His prolonged wandering ends only during the reign of Alexios II Komnenos: now, as a suppliant, he begs the emperor for forgiveness.[71] The act of begging, as we have seen above, soon turns out be another outward deception: once restored to society, Andronikos instigates a plot in order to seize the throne.[72]

Such an "exilic" narrative pattern is maintained throughout the entire narrative of Andronikos's reign. The very moment the trickster Andronikos seems to be restored to society is the very point at which he alienates himself from it. After the reception in Constantinople, he immediately starts conspiring against Alexios (228.29–230.85), travels in search for co-conspirators and cleanses the imperial palace, bewailing that he has no companion to share in his murders. Finally, Andronikos is acclaimed an emperor of the Romans, while the young Alexios II is degraded to the rank of a co-emperor (later to be murdered by hanging on the orders of Andronikos). Even after Andronikos has assumed the imperial throne, he places himself outside the margins of society. Introducing his own vision of order, he brings society to the threshold of destruction. In the end, it turns out that the only method of bringing Andronikos-trickster into society is to annihilate him.

THE OUTSIDER AS DIRT

The marginal and outlandish nature of Andronikos the trickster is linked to a number of scatological episodes. Mary Douglas in her famous *Purity and Danger* has shown that dirt is "a kind of omnibus compendium which includes all the rejected elements of ordered systems."[73] At least one of the incidents narrated by Choniates might be

[71] Niketas Choniates, *History* 228.10–11: ἐκεῖσε τὰς διατριβὰς τελέσων καὶ τὴν μακρὰν ἀνακωχεύσων περιοδείαν καὶ τὸν πολυετῆ καταπαύσων πλάνον.

[72] Niketas Choniates, *History* 228.40–41: Αἰτίαν οὖν ἐφιλοκρίνει καὶ ἀνηρεύνα περιεργότερον, δι' ἧς εὐαφόρμως τῇ βασιλείᾳ ἐπίθοιτο.

[73] Douglas 2001, 37. A compelling application of Douglas's conception of dirt combined with a Bakhtinian approach to Byzantine literature has been put forward by Livanos 2007.

considered from such a perspective. Prior to Andronikos's coronation, a pagan-like festival is organized with some ungodly dances, jumping, clapping and singing in high-pitched voices (270.27–271.42).[74] This serves as a prelude to a scatological episode which occurs during the ceremonial procession, during which Andronikos is escorted by a large number of shield-bearers (272.81 *πλείστων ὑπασπιστῶν*). First, Andronikos receives holy communion in church, and swears on the Wondrous Mysteries that the only reason why he took the crown was a wish to assist Alexios (270.79). The pace of the procession that follows, is extraordinarily fast (272.83). According to the opinion of some men, the old tyrant was unable to control his bowels and defecated in his breeches (273.87–88).[75]

By recounting this story, Choniates not only points to the 'rejected' status of Andronikos, or merely mocks him – he also alludes to his utter ungodliness. The procession episode might be a distant reminiscence of the infamous death of Arius as represented by Socrates of Constantinople in his *Historia ecclesiastica*.[76] The convergence of themes may not be a coincidence. After a dissimulated confession of the orthodox faith before the emperor Constantine, Arius is paraded through the city with the escort of imperial guards. Yet, when he reaches the forum of Constantine, he feels a strange sensation in his bowels; he hastened to the back of the forum, and while defecating, his bowels burst open and the heretic dies.

THE CORRUPT ORDER OF A PROFANE TRICKSTER

As Andronikos gains more and more power, he uses every possible way to turn the known world upside down.[77] At the very beginning of Alexios II's reign, Choniates mentions a portent which foretells the advent of anarchy and epitomizes the contradictory nature of Andronikos: a woman in Propontis gives birth to a deformed child, with an unnaturally huge head and a tiny body (225.50–55). Later on, another portent appears, which foretells Andronikos's brutality and points to his tricksterish multiformity. A comet which appears in the sky is yet another prolepsis of what is to come:

[74] For other instances of such overtly pagan festivities see e.g. Niketas Choniates, *History* 339.20–340.38.

[75] It is for the second time that Andronikos is linked to a scatological episode: we have already encountered another during his attempted escape to Galitza.

[76] Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica* I.38. For the extensive discussion of the story see Muehlberger 2015. Cf. *Vita Euthymii* 7.45 on the death of a blasphemous mime Lampoudios, whose entrails burst open.

[77] In this light, Andronikos the trickster can also be seen as a subversive inventor or a bringer of culture. See his reforms which aimed at curbing taxation, restricting the custom of looting ships: Niketas Choniates, *History* 325.14–328.25.

> The image of the ignited mass which represented a curved shape of a serpent now stretched itself to the uttermost, now it rolled around on both sides into coils, and, at another time, having opened its yawning mouth, it instigated fear in those who were observing it as if it kept gaping from above at those below and [as if it] was thirsting after human blood.[78]

Once on the imperial throne, Andronikos orders public affairs according to his liking.[79] He deposes those officials whom he despises, and appoints the ones who followed him during his conspiracy; those deprived of offices are either exiled from their homeland, or secretly brought to prison where their eyes are gouged out. The overall atmosphere seems to be a distant reminiscence of Thucydides' account of the plague. Reciprocal trust even between best friends is diminished. Moreover, as a result of Andronikos's engineering of reality, even closest relatives turn against each other. The informants who bring the accusations end up being accused themselves – both ultimately end up in the very same cell (258.15–16). Proximity to Andronikos seems just as bad as being his opponent. As Choniates writes, just as in Empedoclean strife, there seemed to be a constant alteration of opposites: "on the very same day many times one could see the same person crowned with wreaths and slain [...], praised and slandered";[80] the entire reality starts to mimic Andronikos's paradoxical character.

After Andronikos's former followers have been condemned to death by stoning and impalement, the inhabitants of Constantinople do not seem to believe their eyes and ears any more:[81]

> It was for the first time that the citizens of Constantinople were to see things hard to accept even through their ears; when such things had been said before, they had plugged their ears, now they bewailed loudly that such events occurred before their eyes. Recapitulating what had been done, they were held by helplessness and, because of what had happened, they were placed under a double punishment. For the sufferings of their fellow citizens overcame them [...].[82]

[78] Niketas Choniates, *History* 251.45–52: ὄφεως γὰρ σχῆμα καὶ ἕλιγμα ἡ τοῦ φανέντος ἀνάμματος ὄψις διατυποῦσα νῦν μὲν διετέτατο, νῦν δ' ἀμφιπεριειλίσσετο εἰς ὁλκούς, ἄλλοτε εἰς χάσμα ἀνοιγομένη στόματος φόβον ἐνεποίει τοῖς θεωμένοις οἱονεὶ καταχάσκουσα ἐξ ὕψους τῶν κάτωθεν καὶ ἀνδρομέου γλιχομένη αἵματος.

[79] Niketas Choniates, *History* 257.73–74: ἐχρῆτο τοῖς κοινοῖς, ὡς ᾑρεῖτο, πράγμασι.

[80] Niketas Choniates, *History* 259.29–33: ἦν δὲ καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τῆς αὐτῆς ἡμέρας πολλάκις ὁρᾶν στεφανούμενον ἅμα [...] καὶ δειροτομούμενον, ὑμνούμενόν τε καὶ βλασφημούμενον.

[81] That is, Andronikos Doukas and Constantine Makroudoukas.

[82] Niketas Choniates, *History* 294.29–34: Καὶ τότε πρώτως οἱ τῆς Κωνσταντίνου πολῖται τεθέανται τὰ καὶ ἀκοαῖς αὐταῖς δυσπαράδεκτα· καὶ ὧν ἀφηγουμένων πρότερον ἔβυον τοὺς ἀκουστικοὺς πόρους, τηνικάδε τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς προκειμένων ἀπωλοφύροντο. καὶ τὸ πραχθὲν ἀναλογιζόμενοι ἀμηχανίᾳ συνείχοντο καὶ διπλῆν ἐπὶ τοῖς γινομένοις δίκην ὑφίσταντο· καὶ τῶν ξυμφυλετῶν γὰρ ἐδάμαζον αὐτοὺς τὰ παθήματα [...]. Italics are mine.

Witnessing these and many more unspeakable acts perpetrated by the corrupt trickster, people are mute with horror and with a gloomy look, they are suffering from insomnia: their sleep is troubled and often stopped by Andronikos who appears in their nightmares (323.75–324.82). The effects of atrocities accomplished by the ungodly tyrant-trickster manifest themselves in a most specious way, they are pushed back into the ephemeral realm of sleep, or to bewildering natural phenomena – portents of deformed bodies or of fiery dragon-shaped comets. In fact, even nature seems to reject the outlandish Andronikos: in the course of his last escape from imprisonment he takes to a boat, but is immediately rejected by the sea, which he had so often defiled with the corpses of innocent men (348.68–71).

THE DEATH OF ANDRONIKOS-TRICKSTER

Finally, the *ποικίλος χαμαιλέων*, the multi-faceted outlandish trickster, had to meet his end from the very same hands of the mob which elevated him to his tyrannical reign. And, surely, such a complex being had to face numerous deaths in order to be killed.[83] The account presented by Choniates is so grossly exaggerated that it simply exceeds the bounds of possibility and logic. Instead, he seems to have chosen to portray it as an extreme culmination of the unfathomably bloody reign rather than as a factual occurrence. In this light, Andronikos's bloody execution in the *History* can be rather seen as the sum total of all brutal deaths he inflicted upon others.

Thus, the tyrant-trickster is slapped in the face, kicked in the buttocks, his beard is plucked, his teeth pulled out, he is beaten even by women and his hand is cut off with an axe; afterwards, he is cast into prison for a couple of days (349.1–9).[84] After this period, his eyes are gouged out, he is seated on a camel and paraded through the city (349.17–19). Thereafter, his head is stricken with clubs, his ribs are pierced with blades and he is pelted with stones (350.25–29) upon which a prostitute pours boiling water on his head (305.30–32). After countless other sufferings (350.39), he is suspended by the legs (350.35–39), his genitals are attacked and his stomach is pierced with a sword all the

[83] This is mentioned by Choniates in the proleptic statement: Niketas Choniates, *History* 252.62–3: *τοῖς μὲν οὖν πλείστοις μέλλειν αὐτίκα Ἀνδρόνικον συλληφθῆναι οἰωνίζετο ἐνθένδε καὶ δίκας γενναίας ὑφέξειν*.

[84] E.g. the death of Alexios II's mother (268.55–58: enclosed in a dungeon, reviled, exposed to hunger and thirst and strangled) and that of Theodore Kantakouzenos (284.40–44: his body is torn into pieces, *ἐκρεανόμουν*, while his head is stabbed onto a pike and paraded through city). Cf. also Andronikos's killing spree (288.64–289.89: blindings, amputations, hangings, gouging out eyes, impalements), the trial and stoning of Constantine Makrodoukas (292.71–294.21) and the treatment of prisoners (334.82–89: all prisoners are condemned to death, some killed by the swords, some cast into the sea with their belly ripped open).

way through the pharynx (350.46–47). Upon seeing this, some Latins compete with their swords, seeing who can strike his sword deepest into the body (350.47–351.51).[85] It is only then that Andronikos dies (351.52–55).

It seems utterly impossible that one man, after all the mutilations, amputations and wounds could have survived such torments for such a long time without bleeding to death.[86] Perhaps the last image offered by Choniates might be read as a subtle hint to the reader (351.52–55): the ex-tyrant sucks his own blood from the newly amputated hand (διὰ τὸ νεαρὸν τῆς τομῆς). Yet, if one turns back a couple of passages earlier in the text, one clearly sees that Andronikos's arm had been cut off on the very first day, before he was cast into prison (349.10). How to make logical sense of these images? Had Andronikos's blood been trickling from his arm all throughout that time, for a number of days? Or is Choniates pointing to the fact that killing such an inconceivable and impossible beast was not an easy matter? Lying there on the ground almost lifeless, but still breathing and drinking his own blood, the trickster stages his last joke.

FINAL REMARKS: THE FUNCTION AND ROLE OF THE STORY OF ANDRONIKOS AS TRICKSTER

I have been arguing throughout this article that the apparent contradictions and oddities in Choniates' narrative of Andronikos's life and reign might be elucidated through the storytelling conventions particular to trickster stories. Certainly, Andronikos, just like other tricksters, "exceeds the bounds of decorum and credibility" and escapes all attempts of simple comprehension.[87] However, contradictory and outlandish features of a trickster always serve a deeper function and convey a more complex social meaning.

Trickster stories arise in times of radical social transition; they disrupt tradition and mediate change. Surely, Andronikos's short, yet eventful rule was one of the pivotal moments of Byzantine history. His bloody tyranny was not only a tragic end point for the rule of the great Komnenoi dynasty, which revived the Byzantine empire after the crisis of the second half of the eleventh century, but also it paved the way for the dynasty of the Angeloi, whose inept emperors led the empire to the catastrophe of 1204. The literary character of Andronikos-trickster in Choniates' *History* might be hence seen as a product of this climactic historical event.

Undoubtedly, through his outlandish, theatrical and paradoxical actions and guises Andronikos, just like the traditional trickster, serves as a heuristic tool, which con-

[85] This most probably points to the infamous slaughter of the Latins in 1182.

[86] For the account of Andronikos's death in the western sources see McNeal 1934.

[87] Babcock-Abrahams 1975, 166.

tests the status quo and challenges the accepted hierarchies and established values of its culture.[88] By shattering all conceivable boundaries, Andronikos-trickster shows that no social reality is set and constant. In the aristocratic rule of the Komnenoi dynasty, Andronikos fashions himself as a champion of the people and a supporter of the lower social classes and, in doing so, disrupts the traditional hierarchies of Byzantine society.[89] He tramples upon and negates all accepted social values, he "challenges all that is stultifying, stratified, bland, or prescriptive".[90] He disregards all fundamental social values of his own society, as both outsider and insider, he challenges social structure both from within and without and deconstructs its meanings. Andronikos shows no respect for religion, one of the pillars of Byzantine society: he disdains the patriarch, he threatens to throw into the river a bishop who engages in theological dispute and organises pagan rites prior to his coronation. He breaks taboos and dissolves boundaries: he shows no respect either to accepted social codes or even to the office of the emperor. He turns the social world upside down: instead of taking care of his subjects he methodically kills, denigrates and lampoons them. Hence, by "doing unthinkable things and speaking unspeakable thoughts", Andronikos-trickster seems to prepare the reader for what is to come as a consequence of 1204: a radical change in Byzantine social reality.

At the same time, Andronikos's biography, just like other trickster stories, is multiple, flexible and anarchic. It can be therefore perceived as an "anarchic discourse", which combines within itself a variety of seemingly conflicting literary traditions: comic, tragic, panegyric, invective, epic, novelistic and many others. As Anne Doueihi noted, this is another standard technique of trickster stories, in which "instead of having one meaning, the text opens onto a plurality of meanings, none of which is exclusively correct because as the narrative develops [...] the conventional level of meaning ceases to be appropriate."[91] These multiple, at times contradictory voices serve as a means of disrupting traditional discourse and, again, undermine what is accepted, taken for granted and traditional.[92]

[88] These features of tricksters have been discussed by Smith 1997, xi–xv.

[89] For this see Grünbart 2011 and Gaul 2003.

[90] Smith 1997, xiii.

[91] Doueihi 1984, 199.

[92] This article is a part of a project funded by the National Science Centre Poland within the scheme of the programme "Sonata-Bis 3", project title: "Intellectual History of Twelfth-Century Byzantium – Adaptation and Appropriation of Ancient Literature," grant number: UMO-2013/10/E/HS2/00170, www.byzantium.pl. I should like to extend my thanks to Ingela Nilsson, Margaret Mullett, and Charis Messis for their invaluable critical comments. Insightful remarks of the anonymous reviewer helped me avoid many errors and inconsistencies. Naturally, should there be any errors, which is as certain as death, debt and taxes, they are entirely and exclusively my fault.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Book of Jeremiah. Ed. A. Rahlfs, *Septuaginta*, vol. 2, Stuttgart 1935.

Choniates, Niketas, *History.* Ed. J.-L. van Dieten. *Nicetae Choniatae historia*, 2 vols, CFHB 11, Berlin and New York 1975.

——— *Oratio* 9. Ed. J.-L van Dieten, *Nicetae Choniatae orationes et epistulae*. CFHB 3, Berlin 1972.

Ephraem the Syrian, *Sermo in pretiosam et vivificam crucem, et in secundum adventum, et de caritate et eleemosyna*. Ed. K. G. Phrantzoles, *Ὁσίου Ἐφραίμ τοῦ Σύρου ἔργα*, vol. 4, Thessalonike 1992.

Eustathios, *Capture of Thessalonike*. Ed. S. Kyriakidis*, Eustazio di Tessalonica. La espugnazione di Tessalonica*. Palermo 1961.

Eustathios, *Parekbolai on Homer's Odyssey*. Ed. G. Stallbaum*, Eustathii archiepiscopi Thessalonicensis commentarii ad Homeri Odysseam*, 2 vols. Hildesheim 1970.

Glykas, Michael, *Annales*. Ed. I. Bekker, *Michaelis Glycae annales*. CSHB, Bonn 1836.

Hesiod, *Theogony*. Ed. M. L. West, *Hesiod. Theogony*. Oxford 1966.

Hymn to Apollo. Ed. T. W. Allen, W. R. Halliday and E. E. Sikes, *The Homeric Hymns*, 2nd edition. Oxford 1936.

Philes, Manuel, *Carmina varia de naturali historia*. Ed. F. Dübner and F. S. Lehrs, *Manuelis Philae versus iambici de proprietate animalium,* Poetae bucolici et didactici. Paris 1862.

Physiologus. Ed. F. Sbordone, *Physiologus.* Rome 1936 (repr. Hildesheim 1976).

Prodromos, Theodore*, Epigrammata in Vetus et Novum Testamentum*. Ed. G. Papagiannis. *Theodoros Prodromos - Jambische und hexametrische Tetrasticha auf die Haupterzaehlungen des Alten und Neuen Testaments.* Wiesbaden 1997.

Socrates Scholasticus, *Historia ecclesiastica.* Eds P. Maraval and P. Périchon, *Socrate de Constantinople Histoire ecclésiastique (Livres I-VII).* Paris 2004–2007.

Tzetzes, John, *Chiliades*. Ed. P. A. M. Leone, *Ioannis Tzetzae historiae*. Lecce 2007.

Vita Euthymii. Ed. P. Karlin-Hayter, *Vita Euthymii patriarchae Constantinopolitani*. Brussels 1970.

Secondary sources

Andrews, D. A. 2009. *The Trickster Revisited: Deception as a Motif in the Pentateuch*. New York.

Babcock-Abrahams, B. 1975. "'A tolerated margin of mess': the trickster and his tales reconsidered" *Journal of the Folklore Institute* 11.3, 147–86.

Baldwin, B. 1982. "A talent to abuse: some aspects of Byzantine satire" *ByzForsch* 8, 19–28.

Bourbouhakis, E. C. 2009. "Exchanging the devices of Ares for the delights of the Erotes. Erotic misadventures and the *History* of Niketas Choniates", in I. Nilsson (ed.) 2009, *Plotting with Eros: Essays on the Poetics of Love and the Erotics of Reading*. Copenhagen, 213–34.

Brinton, D. G. 1868. *The Myths of The New World. A Treatise on the Symbolism and Mythology of the Red Race of America*. New York.

Chaffins, C. R. 2011. "Niketas Choniates' Proteus: Rethinking the Paradoxical 'Roles' of Andronikos I", in: *Thirty-Seventh Annual Byzantine Studies Conference,* DePaul University Chicago, Illinois, October 20–23, 2011: *Abstracts of Papers*, 80–81, http://www.bsana.net/conference/archives/2011/abstracts_2011.pdf (accessed 21 November 2016).

Detienne, M. and J.-P. Vernant, 1978. *Cunning Intelligence in Greek Culture and Society*. Tr. J. Lloyd. Brighton, Sussex and Atlantic Highlands.

Diehl, Ch. 1908. *Figures Byzantines*. Deuxième série. Paris.

Doty, W. G 1993. "A lifetime of troublemaking: Hermes as trickster", in Hynes and Doty (eds) 1993, 46–65.

Doueihi, A. 1984. "Inhabiting the space between discourse and story in trickster narratives" *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 67.3, 283–311.

Douglas, M. 2001. *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo.* New York.

Eastmond, A. 1994. "An intentional error? Imperial art and 'mis'-interpretation under Andronikos I Komnenos" *The Art Bulletin* 76.3, 502–10.

Efthymiadis, S. and A. Simpson (eds) 2009. *Niketas Choniates: A Historian and a Writer.* Geneva.

Garland, L. 1990. "'And his bald head shone like a full moon …': An appreciation of the Byzantine sense of humour as recorded in historical sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries" *Parergon. Bulletin of the Australian and New Zealand Association for Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 8, 1–31.

Gaul, N. 2003. "Andronikos Komnenos, Prinz Belthrandos und der Zyklop: Zwei Glossen zu Niketas Choniates' Χρονικὴ Διήγησις" *BZ* 96.2, 623–60.

Grünbart, M. 2011. "Die Macht der Historiographen – Andronikos Komnenos und sein Bild" *ZRVI* 48, 77–87.

——— 2016. "Typisch Mann, typisch Frau: Beschreibungen von Kaiserinnen in der byzantinischen Historiographie" *BS* 78.1–2, 44–60.

Hynes, W. J. 1993. "Mapping the characteristics of mythic tricksters: a heuristic guide" in Hynes and Doty (eds) 1993, 33–45.

Hynes, W. J and W. G. Doty (eds) 1993. *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts and Criticisms.* London.

Hynes, W. J and T. J. Steele 1993. "Saint Peter, apostle transfigured into trickster", in Hynes and Doty (eds) 1993, 141–58.

James, L. and A. Eastmond 2007. "Eat, drink and pay the price" in: Brubaker, L. and K. Linardou (eds). *Eat, Drink and Be Merry (Luke 12:19): Food and Wine in Byzantium.* SPBS 13, Aldershot, Hants, 175–90.

Jouanno, C. 2009. "Novelistic lives and historical biographies: the Life of Aesop and the Life of Alexander as fringe novels", in E. K. Grammatiki (ed.), *Fiction on the Fringe. Novelistic Writing in the Post-Classical Age.* Leiden and Boston, 33–48.

Kaldellis, A. 2009. "Paradox, reversal and the meaning of history", in Efthymiadis and Simpson (eds) 2009, 75–100.

Karlin-Hayter, P. 1987. "Le Portrait d'Andronic I Comnène et les Oracula Leonis Sapentis" *Byz-Forsch* 12, 103–16.

Kazhdan, A. and S. Franklin 1984. *Studies on Byzantine Literature of the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Cambridge.

Kerenyi, K. 1956. "The trickster in relation to Greek mythology", in P. Radin (ed.), *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology*. New York, 173–91.

Konstantakos, I. 2006. "Aesop adulterer and trickster: A study of Vita Aesopi ch. 75–76" *Athenaeum* 94, 563–600.

Kroeber, K. 1979. "Deconstructionist criticism and American Indian literature" *Boundary 2* 7.3 Revisions of the Anglo-American Tradition: Part 2, 73–90.

Littlewood, A. 2007. "Vegetal and animal imagery in the History of Niketas Choniates", in M. Grünbart (ed.), *Theatron: Rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter*. Berlin and New York, 223–58.

Livanos, C. 2007. "Justice, equality and dirt in the poems of Christopher of Mytilene" *JÖB* 57, 49–73.

Magdalino, P. 2007. "Tourner en dérision à Byzance", in E. Crouzet-Pavan and J. Verger (eds), *La dérision au Moyen âge*. Paris, 55–72.

Magoulias, H. (tr.) 1984. *O City of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniates*. BTT, Detroit.

Magoulias, H. 2011. "Andronikos I Komnenos: a Greek tragedy" *Byzantina Symmeikta* 21, 101–36.

McNeal, E. H. 1934. "The story of Isaac and Andronicus" *Speculum* 9, 324–29.

Muehlberger, S. 2015. "The legend of Arius' death: imagination, space and filth in late ancient historiography" *Past & Present* 227.1, 3–29.

Neville, L. 2016. *Anna Komnene: The Life and Work of a Medieval Historian*. Oxford.

Pontani, A. 1994. *Niceta Choniata, Grandezza e Catastrofe di Bisanzio Libri I–VIII.* Verona.

Runciman, S. 1984. "Women in Byzantine aristocratic society", in M. Angold (ed.), *Byzantine Aristocracy*. BAR Int.ser 221, Oxford, 10–22.

Sarris, V. 1995/7. "Ἡ σατίρα τῆς ἐξουσίας στη συγγραφή τοῦ ἀρχιεοσκόπου Ἐυσταθίου" *Byzantinos Domos* 8–9, 15–29.

Saxey, R. 2009. "The Homeric metamorphoses of Andronikos I Komnenos", in Efthymiadis and Simpson (eds) 2009, 120–44.

Scheub, H. 2012. *Trickster and Hero: Two Characters in the Oral and Written Traditions of the World*. Wisconsin.

Schmidt, G. D. 1995. *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century*. London.

Schmidt, T. 2015. "Protective and fierce. The emperor as lion in contact with foreigners and his subjects in twelfth- and early thirteenth-century Byzantine court literature", in K. Stewart and J. M. Wakeley (eds), *Cross-cultural Exchange in the Byzantine World c. 300–1500 AD*. Oxford, 159–74.

Simpson, A. 2013. *Niketas Choniates, a Historian and a Writer*. Oxford.

Simpson, A. 2013a. "From the workshop of Niketas Choniates: the authority of tradition and literary mimesis" in P. Armstrong (ed.), *Authority in Byzantium*. KCL 14, Farnham, Surrey, 259–68.

Smith, J. R. 1997. *Writing Tricksters. Mythic Gambols in American Ethnic Literature*. Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford.

Tinnefeld, F. H. 1971. *Kategorien der Kaiserkritik in der byzantinischen Historiographie von Prokop bis Niketas Choniates*. Munich.

van Dieten, J.-L. 1994. "Niketas Choniates und Codex Parisinus graecus 1778" *JÖB* 44, 49–58.

Vasilikopoulou, A. 1969/70. "Ανδρόνικος ο Κομνηνός και Οδυσσεύς" *ΕΕΒΣ* 38, 251–59.

Worman, N. 2008. *Abusive Mouths in Classical Athens*. Cambridge.

15

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SUBJECT IN TZETZES' *CHILIADES*: AN ANALYSIS OF ITS COMPONENTS

Aglae Pizzone

> Le lecteur le mieux armé de patience et d'attention se sent desemparé, voire découragé, devant la réédition brute des *Chiliades* de Jean Tzetzès. Le volumineux ouvrage de ce polygraphe du XIIe siècle est, pour l'essentiel, un fatras d'élucubrations mythologiques ayant pour objet de délucider des citations faites par lui même dans ses lettres, mais il s'y cache aussi des renseignements de caractère historique de grand intérêt non seulement pour son époque, mais encore pour une période plus reculée, à preuve de cette généalogue domestique où gisaient sous un énuméré rébarbatif et passablement sybillin des richesses prosopographiques insoupçonnées.[1]

These partly heartfelt, partly humorous words convey Paul Gautier's reaction to the publication of the first modern critical edition of the *Chiliades* by Pietro Leone in 1970. His judgment – "a crumbly mess of mythological ruminations" – is symptomatic of the bad press the work – Tzetzes' commentary on his own letter-collection – has enjoyed in modern scholarship. More in particular, Gautier regards the wealth of information about Tzetzes' life to be found in the *Chiliades* as an incidental byproduct of the author's ruminations, something to be dug out from an otherwise incoherent textual chaos.

In fact, this simplistic, though colourful, description does not capture the reality of the *Chiliades*, nor does it do justice to its carefully thought-out structure. As I have shown elsewhere,[2] Tzetzes' self-commentary is a complex project, one whose design is anything but crumbly. More to the point, autobiographical memories[3] are integral to the work's design, as I shall demonstrate in this paper.

A full critical and narratological analysis of the autobiographical sections of the *Chiliades* has still to be done. In this contribution I shall offer a first attempt by exam-

[1] Gautier 1970, 207 and John Tzetzes, *Chiliades* Leone 1970.

[2] Pizzone 2017.

[3] I take the term 'autobiography' as retrospective life narrative written by the subject itself. The term is of course fraught with theoretical and definitional issues. For a full discussion and a presentation of 'autobiography' in Byzantium see Hinterberger 1999, 31–62.

ining how Tzetzes defines his own autobiographical subject in the first part of the work.[4] To this end I shall take my cue from Elizabeth Bruss's seminal work on autobiographical acts.[5] I look at autobiography in its performative and illocutory dimension, considering the function it aims to fulfil. I shall combine this approach with James Olney's studies on autobiography and the Self, trying to disentangle the metaphors used by Tzetzes and to highlight the way they interact with his life narratives.[6] Finally, I shall use Sidonie Smith's and Julia Watson's categories – memory, experience, identity, space, embodiment, agency – to pinpoint the basic elements of Tzetzes' autobiographical subject.[7] In this respect my take is radically different from the approach recently adopted by Sophia Xenophontos in her contribution on classical heritage and Tzetzes' self-fashioning.[8] Rather than reading Tzetzes' autobiographical narratives against his sources, what interests me is to analyze them against the structure of the *Chiliades*. By using the theoretical tools listed above I shall highlight the consistency of such life narratives, pointing out at the same time their function within the work's design.

To begin with, however, and by way of introduction, let me stress once again that autobiography is not just an outgrowth of the *Chiliades* but a crucial component and this for two main reasons. First, Tzetzes developed the idea of a commentary on his own letter-collection over time. It all started with a self-standing verse epistle, the *Let-*

[4] The work is divided up into three parts: 1. a) *Historiai* 1.1–4.470 commentary on the verse epistle *To Lachanas*; b) *Historiai* 4.471–779 verse epistle *To Lachanas*. 2. *Historiai* 4.780–5.201, commentary on the opening epistle of the letter-collection, addressed to a certain Epiphanios. 3. *Historiai* 5.202–13.668 commentary on the remaining of the letter-collection. See Spelthahn 1904, 18–22. The *Historiai* is multilayered also in terms of chronological composition. The manuscript tradition has preserved traces of three different editions prepared by Tzetzes himself. A first edition, following the publication of the letter-collection and probably never properly published (called α by Leone), was later revised, amended and provided with scholia. The revision according to Tzetzes was carried out for the benefit of Constantine Kotertzes, the patron who supported Tzetzes while writing the second part of the *Allegories* (see Grünbart 2016 and on his role in Tzetzes' network of patronage see Cullhed 2014). This second published 'edition' is preserved in two recensiones (A and B according to Leone): the main difference between the two is the textual arrangement of letters and commentary. In A the commentary is interspersed with the letters (commentary on the epistle to Lachanas-Letter to Lachanas-commentary on the first letter-Letter 1- commentary on the rest of the corpus-Letters 2–107), while in B the commentary is copied without interruptions. A scholion on the first epistle accounts for Tzetzes' change of mind while having the exemplars of his book properly copied from his original (p. 159.8–23 Leone). See again Spelthahn 1904 and Leone 1970, xvi and xxxix–lxi.

[5] Bruss 1976.

[6] Olney 1972.

[7] Smith & Watson 2010.

[8] Xenophontos 2014. For another, insightful, view of the use of the Roman past in Tzetzes and in his treatment of Cato in particular see Lovato 2016.

ter to Lachanas, now part of the *Chiliades* (4.471–779, pp. 142–151 Leone).[9] It is a showcase piece, as testified by the prose subscriptio where Tzetzes boasts of his ability to use judicial, deliberative, and encomiastic rhetoric.[10] In the letter Tzetzes attacks the grammarian John Lachanas working in the Zabareion.[11] The verse epistle is packed with learned references to mythological anecdotes and facts, which spark the creativity of the commentator. But such a display of knowledge is not gratuitous. On the contrary, it is functional to the aim of the letter, i.e. to attack a professional competitor. As such, it has the ambition to be as comprehensive as possible, to encompass, as Tzetzes states in the first lines, σύμπασαν ἱστορίαν.[12] Tzetzes obviously plays with the intrinsic polysemy of the phrase. On one hand, he points to all the anecdotes and narratives alluded to in the letter; on the other he points more directly to "the whole history" starting from Croesus, the first character mentioned in the letter. In the scholia on the *Chiliades* he also labels the letter to Lachanas as περιεκτική, "all-encompassing".[13] Strikingly, in the first three books of the letter-commentary the entries are all introduced by lemmata consisting of historical or mythological personal names, thus transmitting the idea of an imposing handbook. The narration of Tzetzes' individual experiences becomes part of this handbook. Personal stories and traditional history merge together as the letter to Lachanas and the accompanying commentary allow Tzetzes to retell his own biography, to retrospectively order and frame his experiences into a consistent life narrative. Tzetzes turns the epistle to Lachanas plus commentary into a proper autobiographical act, designed to consolidate his own position both in the Constantinopolitan intellectual milieu and for future audiences.

Second, the bulk of the *Chiliades* consists in a commentary on Tzetzes' letter-collection, which most probably was circulated as a self-standing book between 1160 and 1166.[14] Needless to say letter-writing lends itself naturally to accommodate life narratives.[15] Even more so does a self-commentary dealing with an author's collection of letters, which allows the author-commentator to take a retrospective stance. Commenting on letters throughout a long arc of time provides the unique opportunity to examine the mutability of the self, both from a social and a phenomenological point of view. The 'I' of the letters is an ever changing one, as it is shaped by occasion and addressees. Thus, each missive presents a distinctive social self. The letters, moreover,

[9] See Wendel 1948.

[10] *Historiai* 4.142 Leone, prose note.

[11] The Zabareion was the imperial arsenal. On the relevant office and the lexical evolution of the term ζάβα, see Kolias 1980 and Stavrakos 2000, 155–57.

[12] *Historiai* 1.1.1–3, p. 1 Leone.

[13] *Scholia et glossemata* IV 469b, 547.14–15 Leone.

[14] See the chronological outline provided by Wendel 1948, 1996.

[15] See Hinterberger 1999, 55.

testify to different stages of their author's life. The early ones included in the collection date from before 1138,[16] that is to say almost thirty years before the *Chiliades* were composed or perhaps even designed. By glossing on these earlier missives Tzetzes looks at a younger version of himself through the lens of time.

The very passage to which Gautier devotes his contribution[17] is exemplary in this respect. The autobiographical ἱστορία is taken from the commentary on letter 6, written before 1138 to one Isaac Komnenos. At the time Tzetzes was working as a *grammateus* in the capital after his unfortunate service with another Isaac, the eparch of Berroia, in 1131/1132.[18] The letter is a typical Tzetzean product. It is a complaint against a fellow *grammateus* he labels as "Lepreos" who was also working for Isaac Komnenos.[19] Tzetzes urges his patron to get rid of his colleague, arguably because of a mistake of some sort whose responsibility he was not ready to share. Tzetzes' ancestry is only briefly mentioned in the letter, while the commentary expands on it, reinforcing the *persona* created 30 years before. In the letter to Isaac, Tzetzes argues that Lepreos is a disgrace for all the famous grammarians of the past. He also stresses – jokingly? – that he is unjustly accused and will therefore not hesitate to publicly shame Isaac. He supports his claim by mentioning well-known episodes in which people accused relatives or close acquaintances, beginning with famous orators such as Andocides and Demosthenes, who had accused respectively father and cousin.[20]

The commentary on letter 6 counts among the longest in the *Chiliades* and is particularly emphatic in underlining Tzetzes' verbal and mnemonic prowess.[21] As recently stressed by Panagiotis Agapitos,[22] Tzetzes presents the reader with both a personal and an ideal genealogy. He thus unpacks, as it were, a concept only implicit in the commented letter. The powerful display of knowledge, moreover, serves to reinforce the bold image of superiority and defiance toward his patron projected in letter 6, thus creating a sense of continuity in Tzetzes' self-representation.

The (auto)biographical aspect is integral to the project of the *Chiliades*. The work's finale confirms this assumption. The actual commentary on the letter-collection ends

[16] See the reconstruction of Grünbart 1996.

[17] 5.17.585–630, pp. 185–86 Leone.

[18] Tzetzes himself provides information about this mishap throughout his work, but in particular in the Μικρομεγάλη Ἰλιάς and in the *Allegories*, see Braccini 2009–2010 and Agapitos forthcoming. A new source for the episode is edited now in Cullhed 2015, 57–58. See also Kaldellis 2009, 26–27.

[19] Grünbart 1996, 179–80 and Agapitos forthcoming.

[20] See Tzetzes' commentary at 6.49–50.361–403, pp. 216–18. Tzetzes relies on Ps.-Plutarch, *Lives of the Ten Orators* 834e and Aeschines 2.93 and 3.51.

[21] See for instance 5.21.711–18, p. 190; 6.37.71–74, p. 204; 6. 50.382–403, pp. 217–18 Leone.

[22] Agapitos forthcoming, to which I refer also for further bibliography about Isaac Komnenos.

at 12.496.610 (p. 526 Leone). However, as specified by Tzetzes, the manuscript still had some blank space to be filled. He thus decides to add a short summary of Homer's genealogy and life.[23] The choice is anything but innocent. Eric Cullhed has convincingly shown that Tzetzes tends to frame himself as a son of or even as a new Homer in his attempt to overcome competition of other colleagues, Eustathios of Thessalonike in particular.[24] Cullhed aptly emphasizes the compositional methods ascribed to Homer in the *Exegesis on the Iliad*, comparing them with Tzetzes' own. In fact, the analogy could be pushed even further: the situation Tzetzes describes for Homer in *Exegesis on the Iliad* 68.8–69.8 looks like an exact replica of Tzetzes' working system when he put together the *Chiliades*. In both cases we have subsequent redactions, with a first circulation in the form of loose sheets, suspended between literacy and orality and exposed to losses and damages.[25] Of course the *Exegesis* precedes the *Chiliades* by at least fifteen years,[26] but we can assume that Tzetzes stayed true to his working methods throughout his whole life. We also know that Tzetzes regarded the *Chiliades* as his flagship work.[27] Sealing his signature piece through a condensed version of Homer's life is a move designed to further stress the identification, providing the ultimate foil against which to read the autobiographical comments populating the *Chiliades*.

I shall now focus on the nature of Tzetzes' autobiographical self as it emerges from the life narratives presented in the first part of the *Chiliades*, namely the Epistle to Lachanas. In the first section I shall explore the metaphors used by Tzetzes to talk about himself, while in the second section I shall spell out the main components of his autobiographical subject as they emerge in such narratives.

WHICH METAPHOR FOR TZETZES' SELF?

The composition of the Chiliades began, as I said, with the verse epistle to John Lachanas, designed by the author for self-commentary. Lachanas is known also from

[23] 13.96.611–68, pp. 526–28 Leone.

[24] Cullhed 2014.

[25] The commentary on the *Letter to Lachanas* almost certainly circulated in this way. His final part got lost after it was stolen from the room of a fellow of Tzetzes who had died in the imperial palace. Soldiers found Tzetzes' piece of work and sold it on the market (*Historiai* 6.40, introductory prose note). Elsewhere, Tzetzes urges the reader to try and recover the material he could not transcribe in order to add it to the book, cursing whoever had it and did not want to return it (*Scholia et glossemata* IV 469b, p. 547.9–12 Leone and Spelthahn, *Studien* 26).

[26] It was composed between 1138 and 1145 according to Wendel 1948, 1966.

[27] In the iambic verses transmitted in the manuscripts belonging to the Chiliades' second recensio, the *Historiai* is labelled as "Book Alpha of Tzetzes' labors" (Leone 1969–1970, the text is at 1.1, p. 134), alluding to a probable first volume of Tzetzes' collected work. On this subject, see Pizzone forthcoming.

Ep. 105,[28] a short and apologetic missive in which Tzetzes rebuffs the allegation of nasty gossip. The letter, composed in 1155,[29] proves that the relationship between Lachanas and Tzetzes was already tense at that date. Lachanas was also in Eustathios's circle: we have a letter[30] in which the future archbishop of Thessalonike praises him as a man well versed in literature and rhetoric. The relationship between Tzetzes and Lachanas appears to have worsened when the latter was appointed ζαβαρειώτης, or officer responsible for the arsenal. Tzetzes' social resentment and, apparently, Lachanas's new despising demeanour prompted the verse epistle 'opening' the *Chiliades*.

The letter consists of lengthy lists of mythological and historical examples, interspersed with more narrative, autobiographical sections. The first section of the letter (4.471–555) includes a series of mythical *exempla*, designed to illustrate Lachanas's enormous pride about his new office.[31] Mythical parallels begin with Croesus boasting of his treasure and end, in a mock-epic crescendo, with Sesostris, whom the Assyrians regarded as a God κοσμοκράτωρ. Besides providing abundant material for the self-commentary,[32] the quantity and quality of the *exempla* serve the obvious purpose of caricaturing Lachanas's arrogance. The learned introduction is followed by a narrative section (4.556–603), in which Tzetzes finally declares the reason for his resentment toward his former correspondent and recalls the education received by his father. The final mention of the "bonds of friendship" broken by his former friend paves the way to a further section of *exempla*, in which Tzetzes tries to demonstrate that even senseless objects are more grateful than Lachanas (4.604–714). The climax is: barbarians, animals, plants, unanimated objects. A parainetic section follows, wherein Tzetzes reminds again his addressee that only virtue and friendship can escape the powerful hands of oblivion (4.715–30). This prompts a new list of paradigmatic narratives about forgotten glories (4.731–67). A final parainetic section closes the piece (4.767–79).

Retrospective life stories are present both in the narrative section of the letter and in the commentary when Tzetzes addresses the figure of Cato the Elder. As we have seen Tzetzes mixes personal and cultural memories, constructing life narratives deeply shaped by the Hellenic-Byzantine heritage. Faced to the social threats of competitors or unappreciative patrons Tzetzes reacts by recasting his own personal story and making it exemplary, part of a sort of an omni-comprehensive handbook of historical and

[28] P. 152.16–21 Leone. See Grünbart 1996, 221–22.

[29] Grünbart 1996, 221–22.

[30] *Ep.* 48 Kolovou.

[31] 4.471–472, p. 142 Leone: "Lachanas Zabareiotes, you pride yourself on that, just like Croesus on his treasures and Midas on his piece of gold" (Ζαβαρειῶτα Λαχανᾶ, τούτοις καὶ γὰρ ἁβρύνῃ / ἤπερ ὁ Κροῖσος θησαυροῖς καὶ Μίδας τῷ χρυσίῳ).

[32] Each one of the characters named in the *exempla* has a separate rubric (1.1.4–3.68.104).

mythological facts. His project is further reinforced by the metaphors through which he frames his own self.

According to James Olney, autobiography is a way to confer order to the phenomenological mutability of the self, to its ever-changing and ultimately ungraspable quality. Metaphors are a constitutive part of this endeavour, as, in fact, the self can be apprehended only metaphorically:

> The self expresses itself by the metaphors he creates and projects, and we know it by those metaphors; but it did not exist as it now does and as it is now before creating its metaphors. We do not see or touch the self but we do and touch its metaphors: and thus we 'know' the self, activity or agent, represented in the metaphor and in the metaphorizing. Hopkins' noun-verb linguistic coinage, also highly metaphoric, is a neatly compact answer to the question: the self, in its metaphors, "Selves – goes itself."[33]

More in general we can say that metaphors are essential to the way we think and we experience/narrate the world.[34] Looking at which metaphors are consciously chosen within a life-story can provide us with precious first-hand insight into the goals the narrator wants to achieve through autobiography. This does not impinge on what I would label as "subjective reliability" of the autobiographical narrative. As Elizabeth Bruss points out, autobiographies are illocutionary acts with a given purpose and they acquire meaning according to the relevant community of writers and readers/hearers.[35] In this respect a study of the metaphors used by Tzetzes can help clarify the purpose of the autobiographical acts in the *Chiliades* and offer insights into the life-story he wanted to be identified with. At the same time metaphors have also a universalizing function, turning individual experiences into exemplary narratives. What Bruss says about Nabokov's autobiography ultimately applies also to our Byzantine author:[36]

> Not only his own autobiography flaunts its artificiality, but achieves an almost Olympian impersonality as well, suggesting that no autobiographer ought to depict himself without first becoming aware of how much fiction is implicit in the idea of a 'self'.

The first question to be asked then is: how does Tzetzes' self show itself in the *Chiliades*? As I have emphasized elsewhere, in the commentary on the *Epistle to Lachanas*

[33] Olney 1972, 34–35.

[34] Olney published his book on metaphors in autobiography well before the seminal work of Lakoff & Johnson 1980, where the two authors explain how and why metaphors are essential to the way we think and affect our perceptions. The two approaches, however, complement each other very well.

[35] Bruss 1976, 15. The fact that Bruss singles out didacticism as one of the elements characterizing the autobiographical act is strikingly fitting with Tzetzes' endeavour and the literary form of the *Chiliades*.

[36] Bruss 1976, 18.

Tzetzes tends to present himself consistently as a breathing or a walking library, someone who has memorized and internalized all the books ever written:[37]

> Οἶδας δὲ πάντως ἀκριβῶς πῶς πᾶσαν οἶδα βίβλον
> ἐκ στήθους τε καὶ στόματος οὕτως ἑτοίμως λέγειν.
> Οὐδὲ γὰρ μνημονέστερον τοῦ Τζέτζου θεὸς ἄλλον
> ἄνδρα τῶν πρίν τε καὶ τῶν νῦν ἐξέφηνεν ἐν βίῳ.
>
> You are very well aware that I know every book
> by heart and that I am ready to declaim them by heart and mouth.
> And God never let appear a man endowed with a stronger memory
> than Tzetzes, neither among those of the past nor among those of the present.

In other passages Tzetzes' στῆθος is represented, using a traditional trope, as an inscribed tablet, carrying all his knowledge.[38] This emphasis on memory is present throughout his whole oeuvre[39] and is allegedly itself motivated by a biographical episode. After his rift with the eparch of Berroia, Tzetzes was forced – or so he says – to sell all his books, the only exceptions being Plutarch's *Lives* and some technical treatises. From that moment he had to rely on his memory alone, thus becoming a living repository of learning. However, as we have seen, the *Chiliades* also represent an enactment of this learning. They are its fuller instantiation. In other words, through the metaphor of the tablet and through his emphasis on book-memorization, Tzetzes manages both to create a sort of biographical *fil rouge* from early youth to mature age and to present his own self as consubstantial with his book. Tzetzes' autobiographical subject ultimately goes itself in and through the *Chiliades*. This also explains why the *Chiliades* never tries to obliterate the different textual and compositional layers but emphasizes instead the various stages of composition. The editorial project behind the work becomes an ongoing metaphor of Tzetzes' own life ambitions and strives. The very same mishaps characterizing the composition of the work due to others' misdemeanor – textual thefts, scribal errors[40] – become thus a powerful metaphor of Tzetzes' struggles to assert his own presence in the Constantinopolitan intellectual and aristocratic milieus.

COMPONENTS OF THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SUBJECT

After clarifying the basic metaphor underlying Tzetzes' autobiographical subject, I shall now proceed to analyze its main components, that is: a) memory, b) experience, c)

[37] 1.11.278–81, p. 13 Leone. See Pizzone 2017, 197–198.
[38] 5.28.815–25, pp. 194–95 Leone.
[39] Tzetzes had resorted to the same simile in one of his earliest works: *Allegories on the Iliad* 15.87–88.
[40] See n. 25 and cf. above all *Scholia in epistulas*, p. 159.8–23 Leone.

identity, d) space, e) embodiment, f) agency.[41] To this end and to facilitate the analysis I shall first provide a translation of the two main autobiographical narrative passages of the *Letter to Lachanas* and accompanying commentaries.

Letter to Lachanas 4.564–603, pp. 145–46 Leone
Ὡς πρὶν γὰρ Κάτων τὸν υἱὸν ἐπαίδευσεν ἐν πᾶσιν,
οὕτως ἡμᾶς ἐμὸς πατὴρ ἐν λόγοις καὶ τοῖς ἔργοις
καὶ πᾶσιν ἐξεπαίδευσε σωφρόνως καὶ κοσμίως,
μᾶλλον τῶν ἄλλων πλέον με καταφρονεῖν διδάξας
πλούτων καὶ τύφων καὶ ἀρχῆς καὶ τῆς πρωτοεδρίας.
Ἐγγὺς πεντεκαιδέκατον τρέχοντα γὰρ τὸν χρόνον,
τὸν νέον καὶ εὐόλισθον τηρῶν τῆς ἡλικίας,
αὐτῷ με συνεκοίταζε, πᾶν παραινῶν τὸ δέον,
ἥπερ ὁ Κάτων τῷ υἱῷ, ὁ Σόλων δὲ τῷ Κροίσῳ,
ὁ δ' ἰατρὸς Θεόδωρος ἐκείνῳ τῷ Χαγάνῳ,
(…)
Ὑπὲρ ἐκείνους ὁ πατὴρ ἀεὶ νυξὶ παρῄνει,
ἀρχὰς ἀνθρώπων λέγων μοι καὶ βίων μεταπτώσεις
(…)
Οὕς μοι δεικνὺς ἐκέλευε βλέπειν τὸν βίον οἷος,
οὐκ ἐκ ξυλίνου τοῦ νεκροῦ, κατὰ τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους,
οὐδὲ κατὰ τοὺς Λάκωνας μεθύσκων τοὺς οἰκέτας,
καὶ μύθους πλάττων ἔλεγε συντείνοντας πρὸς τοῦτο.
Οὕτω μοι νὺξ παραίνεσις ὑπῆρχε πᾶσα τότε,
ἡμέρα δὲ διδάσκαλος ὑπῆρχε μαθημάτων
μετὰ σωφρόνων τῶν πληγῶν καὶ μᾶλλον ἀτακτοῦντι.
Καὶ πρακτικῶς ἐπλήρου μοι τότε τὰς παραινέσεις.
Εἰς βαλανεῖον γάρ ποτε δεῆσαν γεγονέναι,
τοῖς δούλοις ἂν ἐκέλευσεν εἰς ἔσχατον κλιντῆρα
θεῖναι τὸ στρωματόδεσμον, τοὺς δ' ἄλλους παρατρέχειν,
καίτοι σχεδὸν τυγχάνοντος λουτρῶνος ἡμετέρου.
Τὰς δ' ἄλλας λέγειν παρεῶ πάσας αὐτοῦ παιδεύσεις.
Οὕτως, ὡς ἔφην, παιδευθεὶς μηδὲν δοκεῖν τὸν βίον,
οὐκ ἐπαλγύνομαι ποσῶς σαῖς ἀπροσηγορίαις.
Θλίβομαι δέ σε καθορῶν βλαπτόμενον ἐσχάτως.
Καὶ γὰρ βαρβαρωδέστερος δοκεῖν βαρβάρων σπεύδεις,
ἀλόγων ἀλογώτερος τιμώμενος ἐν λόγῳ,
ἀναισθητότερος αὐτῶν αὐτῶν τῶν ἀναισθήτων,
τῷ μὴ μεμνῆσθαι μηδαμῶς πάντως θεσμῶν φιλίας.

As back then Cato instructed his son in everything,
so likewise did our father educate us
in any word and deed wisely and decorously,
teaching me above all to despise greatly
riches and pride, and power and primacy.
As I approached my fifteenth year,
watching over my young and unsteady age,
he used to sleep with me at night, duly advising me on everything,

[41] See Smith & Watson 2010, 21–61.

as Cato did with his son and Solon with Croesus,
Theodore the physician with that famous Kaganos
(…)
My father used to spend all night exhorting me beyond them,
telling me about the origins of men and the changes in life,
(…)
and by means of these characters he pushed me to look at the meaning of life,
neither through a wooden corpse, as the Egyptians do,
nor by getting the slaves drunk, as the Spartans do,
and he used to invent myths aiming at the same goal.
So, back then nights were always a source of moral exhortation to me,
while days would teach me the lessons to be learned,
accompanied by prudent blows, especially when I was undisciplined.
And the admonitions were then perfected in practice.
So, when we needed to go to the bath,
he would order the servants to bring the sack to the last seat
and pass by the others, even though the bathhouse was almost ours.
But I won't mention all his different educational methods.
Since I was educated to deem life nothing, as I said,
I couldn't be less saddened by your refusal to address me.
I am just saddened because I see you terribly misled,
for you are trying your best to look more barbarian than the barbarians themselves,
to be regarded more irrational than the irrational creatures,
and more senseless that the senseless beings, even though you should be sensible
as you are completely oblivious of the limits of friendship.

***Chiliades* 3.70 (On Cato), 159–89, pp. 88–90 Leone**
Οὕτω κατὰ τὸν Κάτωνα τὸν πρότερον ἐκεῖνον
κἀμοὶ πάντων διδάσκαλος πατὴρ ἐμὸς ὑπῆρξε
μικροῖς ἐν διαλείμμασι στέλλων με διδασκάλοις.
Μιᾶς δ᾽ ἡμέρας πατρικῆς ἀγὼν ὁ περὶ λόγους
τοῦ μηνιαίου χρόνου με τῶν διδασκάλων πλέον
ἀνῆγε, προεβίβαζεν· ἀλλ᾽ ἀσυγκρίτῳ τρόπῳ
ποιῶν ἐν λόγοις αὔξεσθαι κατὰ τοὺς Ἀλωείδας,
πῦρ ζῶν, ἐπιτειχίζων με, πυργῶν πρὸς ἀντιπάλους,
ποιῶν Βελλεροφόντην με, πτερόιππον ἱππότην,
εἴτε Περσέα πτερωτὸν Γοργόνων ἀναιρέτην,
τῶν ὑλικῶν ἐλεύθερον καὶ τῶν ἀπογαιούντων,
ἀρχῶν καὶ δόξης καὶ τιμῆς καὶ φιλοχρηματίας,
ἅπερ συνέχει σύμπαντας τοὺς ἐξ ἀνελευθέρων.
Οὕτω παιδεύει με πατὴρ ὡς τὸν υἱὸν ὁ Κάτων·
εἰ δέ τις καὶ τὸν Κάτωνα χρῄζει μανθάνειν οἷος,
ἐμὲ βλεπέτω, Κάτωνος ἔμψυχον ζωγραφίαν
καὶ Παλαμήδους τοῦ σοφοῦ παιδὸς τοῦ τοῦ Ναυπλίου.
Ἄμφω καὶ γὰρ εὐήλικες ἦσαν πρὸς ἡλικίαν,
λεπτοί, γλαυκοί, λευκόχροες, πυρρότριχες καὶ οὖλοι,
ὥσπερ ἐγὼ τοῖς σύμπασιν. Ἀλλ᾽ ὁ μὲν Παλαμήδης
μηδέποτε θυμούμενος, ὡς λόγοι παριστῶσι·
τοῦτο καὶ μόνον πρὸς ἡμᾶς διάφορον ἐσχήκει,
σωματικοῖς καὶ ψυχικοῖς ὅμοιος ὢν μοι πᾶσιν,

ὡς καὶ τὴν κόμην αὐχμηρὰν ἴσην ἡμῖν κεκτῆσθαι.
Ἐξ ἀλουσίας δε ἀμφοῖν τοῦτο συνδεδραμήκει·
ἡμεῖς εὐχαῖται φύσει γαρ καὶ τῶν ἁβροβοστρύχων,
ὁ Κάτων δὲ διέφερεν ἡμῶν τῷ μὴ θυμοῦσθαι,
εἰ τέως οὐχὶ ψεύδονται τῶν συγγραφέων λόγοι.
Αἱ κράσεις αἱ τοιαῦται γαρ θερμαί τε καὶ θυμώδεις
ἡμῶν γοῦν, ὥσπερ ἔφημεν, διέφερεν ἐν τούτῳ,
καὶ τῷ φιλοκερδέστατος καὶ φειδωλὸς ὑπάρχειν.
Τοῖς δ᾽ ἄλλοις πᾶσιν ἐμφερεῖς τυγχάνομεν ἀλλήλοις,
σωματικοῖς, ὡς ἔδειξα, καὶ τοῖς ψυχικωτάτοις.

Just like that famous Cato the Elder,
my father as well was a teacher of all things to me,
trusting me to teachers for short periods of time.
A one-day training in literature with my father
used to uplift me and bring me forward more than one month
with my teachers: making me grow in learning
in an unmatched way, like the Aloadae,
a living fire, fortifying me, fortifying me against my competitors,
making me Bellerophon, a winged-horse horseman,
or a winged Perseus, slayer of Gorgons,
free from material concerns turning men into stone,
from power and reputation and honor and greediness,
which get hold of all those who are not free.
My father educates me, as Cato his son;
and if anyone fancies to know what Cato looked like,
let them turn their eyes to me, a living portrait of Cato
and of Palamedes, the wise son of Nauplios.
Indeed they were both tall for their age,
thin, with grey eyes, fair skin, full and red hair,
just like me in all these things. Except that Palamedes
never got angry, as testified by tradition.
This was the only difference between us,
while as regards other physical and moral traits we were similar,
for instance both of us happens to have dry hair.
This is because we bath rarely,
for by nature we had beautiful and delicate hair.
But Cato was different from us in that he never got angry,
if the historiographers have told the truth so far.
For our temperament is such that we are hot and fierce.
He was different from us in this respect, as said,
and in that he was a thrifty money-lover.
As regards all the other traits we happened to resemble each other
both in the body, as I showed, and in the soul.

a) Memory

In Tzetzes' autobiographical narrative memory plays a twofold role. On one hand we find the recollection of Tzetzes' personal education by his father. On the other, we have

the description of culturally determined practices of memorization and learning. Just as in the design of the *Chiliades,* the two dimensions are deeply linked.

As we have seen before, Tzetzes emphasizes time and again an "archaeological" model of memory.[42] He envisages himself as a storehouse, a huge repository of books and stories from which he can dig out what he needs. Such a model is inscribed here in his most intimate experience. Tzetzes describes his father as the initiator of the process of internalization carried out throughout his whole adult life. The process is one of both reception and creation. It is not just that the stories call for or inspire reenactment. According to Tzetzes, his father also shaped and created myths (μύθους πλάττων ἔλεγε συντείνοντας πρὸς τοῦτο). This is an important detail. Traditional stories from the Hellenic tradition and "narrative heirlooms" from Tzetzes' family are put here on the same footing.

This is also where Tzetzes' act of remembering becomes highly contextual. It is not just the mention of Cato that prompts the recollection of the father's teaching techniques. The *Chiliades* themselves have as inscribed audience an anonymous pupil.[43] And Tzetzes himself is known for his creative use of antiquity.[44] Therefore, not only does Tzetzes become Cato, he also becomes his father by reproducing his same educational techniques. At the same time the students become a younger version of Tzetzes. If the *Chiliades* were actually designed as a didactic tool, Tzetzes' pupils exercised their memory on the same stories that had allegedly populated their teacher's childhood. Personal remembering is turned into collective remembering. Or, at least, this was Tzetzes' ambition.

b) Experience

Experience and cultural memory are closely intertwined. The daily and nocturnal routines devised by Tzetzes' father are presented as shaping his ethical identity. The self appears to be scaffolded[45] through traditional myths. Rather than just listening to the stories of Bellerophon or Perseus, Tzetzes *becomes* one of them (ποιῶν Βελλεροφόντην με, πτερόιππον ἱππότην, / εἴτε Περσέα πτερωτὸν Γοργόνων ἀναιρέτην). His autobiographical subject is literally *made* by the experience of being taught, as suggested by the chosen simile with the Aloadae, the giants Otus and Ephialtes who, according to

[42] See Olney 1998, 19–21.

[43] See *Historiai* 1.17.414, p. 19; 2.53.839, p. 75; 2.60.979, p. 81; 8.206.516, p. 315; 8.206.521, p. 315; 10.341.549, p. 404 Leone.

[44] See Braccini 2009–2010, 164–69.

[45] I take the metaphor of scaffolding from developmental psychology. The notion was first introduced by Jerome Bruner (see Bruner 1978) to describe the processes of language-acquisition in children. It then became used in psychological parlance to qualify the – often narrative – construction of selfhood (see Young and Bursztajn 2016).

Homer, used to grow by one cubit in breadth and one fathom in height every year.[46] In Tzetzes' memories discourses appear to have a physical quality: they are not just heard, but experienced and felt. They have the power to distort the perception of time, bringing about acceleration in the hearer's physical growth.

Experience in Tzetzes' design of the *Chiliades* has also a distinctive authoritative value. As said in the previous section, within the *Chiliades* Tzetzes is presented as a new Cato who replicates his own father's teaching methods. However in this virtuous circle he himself is a product of such methods. By retelling his own experience, Tzetzes shows his audience not only what they could get but also what they could become by following his teachings. Once again the mention of the "other teachers" to whom his father entrusted him from time to time is not innocent, but serves the purpose of underlying Tzetzes' own superiority over colleagues and competitors. Like his father he will make his pupils grow faster and better.

c) Identity

Memory and experience serve the purpose of channelling the sense of a strong moral identity. Tzetzes presents himself as a fringe figure who has consciously decided to forgo the seductions of the world. Through autobiographical memory he can make sense of his unstable social self, which also emerges strongly in the staged conversation with Lachanas. Throughout the *Chiliades* Tzetzes reclaims, as it were, and makes his own, the uncertainty of his social status.

It is far from coincidental that all the identity-making myths mentioned in Tzetzes' autobiographical narratives present characters that are outcast or end up as such, being excluded or condemned by their peers or superiors. In his twenties, Tzetzes actually experienced the same fate as Bellerophon – or so he says – as his falling out with Isaac in Berroia was caused by the false allegations of the latter's wife.[47] By mentioning the story in the commentary on the letter to Lachanas Tzetzes creates a strong continuity with his young self and with his earliest works. Moreover, by making the story of Bellerophon a personal foundational myth – he was shaped as a new Bellerophon already in his boyhood, way before meeting Isaac – he can redeem the failure that marked his beginnings and inscribe it, as it were, into the core of his personal identity.

The parallel with Palamedes was also particularly dear to Tzetzes. In a version of the myth used among others in a lost play by Euripides, the hero falls victim of Odysseus's envy and is sentenced to death because of an act of forgery.[48] Tzetzes often underlines

[46] Homer, *Odyssey* 11.305–08.

[47] See *Trojan Songs* 3.280–290 and Cullhed 2014, nn. 44 and 47.

[48] See Hyginus 105.

the parallel between the hero's situation and his own.[49] Issues of forgery, plagiarism, intellectual theft and false attributions, moreover, surface time and again in the *Chiliades* and in the letter-collection and are also constitutive of its textual history.[50] We have seen above that Tzetzes had often to defend himself from competitors stealing his work, such as Eustathios of Thessalonike. Strikingly, the latter tends to create an overarching analogy between Odysseus's character and his own *persona* of commentator.[51] The story of Palamedes conveys an important part of Tzetzes' identity, emphasizing his moral and material struggle against the Odysseuses of his time.

d) Space

The foundational myths chosen by Tzetzes highlight marginality and exclusion/seclusion. Bellerophon and the Aloadae try to attack Mount Olympos from the outside but are chased away by the gods. Perseus experiences seclusion in his childhood and is repeatedly exiled from Argos. They are, all of them, exceptional characters pushed to the margins. Such marginality reflects Tzetzes' social position and his constant struggle to be admitted into the highest circles of the capital. It also resonates with his ethnic origins, since, as he recalls in the *Chiliades*, the ancestors of his mothers were foreigners: his grandmother came from Georgia. His paternal grandfather, moreover, also called John, was illiterate, even though rich enough to host intellectuals in his house.[52] Panagiotis Agapitos has recently argued that Tzetzes belonged to the middle class of Constantinople.[53] The identity-shaping stories that scaffold his autobiographical self seem to confirm his being in between worlds, just about to enter the inner circles of Mount Olympos, but never really getting there.

The idea of seclusion is further reinforced also by the settings of Tzetzes' memories in the autobiographical passages quoted above. Tzetzes chooses very private spaces: the darkness of his bedroom, the separatedness of the bath place. The fact that Tzetzes and his father had to visit the bathhouse may also indicate that they did not possess one in their household, further confirming a not quite privileged social background. These locations and settings, moreover, stress the vulnerability of the subject: Tzetzes' father controls him at night, in the most intimate of places, whereas he is exposed to the others' gaze in the bathhouse. The baths, in particular, were explicitly associated

[49] See above all *Allegories on the Iliad* prologue 724–39. Cf. Braccini 2009–2010, 167–68; Xenophontos 2014, 198–200.

[50] See above and cf. *Ep*. 89, addressed to the brothers Andronikos and Theodore Kamateros, for a typical example of how in the performative dimension of Constantinopolitan learned circles false attributions could become the cause of social concern and serious trouble.

[51] See Pizzone 2016.

[52] 5.17.585–630, pp. 185–86 Leone.

[53] Agapitos forthcoming.

with feelings of anxiety, to the point that Byzantine dreambooks interpreted nocturnal visions of baths as pointing to a state of mental confusion.[54] These are spaces bound to evoke and trigger emotions that are, once again, linked to exclusion, namely anger and shame[55] as we will see in the next section. Tzetzes chooses to isolate spaces from his life which were apt to emphasize social experiences of rejection and ostracism, which he identifies as constants in his own life-story.

e) Embodiment

In Tzetzes' autobiographical narratives the body assumes a central role. There is a striking focus on the physical aspects both of his person and of his education. His father does not act through replicas – the Egyptian wooden corpse – or by proxy – the Spartan slaves – but directly on his son's body. Tzetzes unwillingly emphasizes repressions – his father controlling his nocturnal desires, the blows – and the eliciting of shame – being pushed to the last seats of the bathhouse. Again we are faced to a constant in Tzetzes' autobiography. Shame due to public humiliation often surface in Tzetzes' life narratives – beginning with the return on foot from Berroia,[56] and the letter to Lachanas is ultimately a response to an act of social shaming and exclusion.

If shame emerges indirectly from Tzetzes' account, anger is explicitly mentioned. Tzetzes pinpoints this emotion as his most distinctive trait, depicting it as rooted in his physical constitution. In the *Chiliades* he associates anger with his heated temperament, while in another passage from the *Allegories* he goes on to say that this characteristic is due to a lack of phlegm.[57] Tzetzes typically uses the body to justify his angry outbursts, which seem in fact to be motivated once again by the awareness of his fringe social position and marginal role.[58]

[54] Oberhelman 2008, 68 with further bibliography on the evolution of the bathhouses in Byzantium from late antiquity onwards.

[55] For the relevant bibliography see Wesselmann et al. 2016, 16–17.

[56] See above. On professional rivalry in Tzetzes' life, see more in general Jeffreys 1974.

[57] Prologue 724–39.

[58] The overarching polemic against Andronikos Kamateros (see Bucossi, *Andronici Camateri Sacrum Armamentarium*, xix–xxiv), characterizing the third part of the *Chiliades,* reinforces this impression. Andronikos, a former patron who had decided to support a competitor at the Komnenian court, is the target of Tzetzes' most violent outbursts as exemplified for instance by 11.369.210–49, pp. 430–31 Leone. On Tzetzes' struggles with Andronikos and his violent outbursts in the *Historiai,* see Agapitos 2017.

f) Agency

Finally, what emerges from Tzetzes' life-narrative is the picture of a subject struggling to conquer unimpaired agency. He describes himself as a passive object of his father's education, controlled and constantly watched. Even the mythical models he chooses for himself are heroes whose autonomous agency is severely compromised or punished. Paradoxically, while emphasizing the freedom of choice underlying his life, Tzetzes ends up conveying a consistent sense of powerlessness. This tension between ambition for control and social constraints inhabits the *Chiliades* as a whole and epitomizes Tzetzes' struggles to frame his own identity.

CONCLUSIONS

A close reading of the life-narratives embedded in the first part of the *Chiliades* shows that autobiography is crucial to the design of the work. The metaphors of self – the library/the tablet – featured in the work demonstrate that the *Chiliades* are fundamentally retrospective in nature. They aim to wrap up in a consistent narrative Tzetzes' personal and professional experiences, merging together the book and its author. The consistency is both internal – autobiographical narratives reflect the overall goal of the work – and external – the narratives reprise motives, metaphors and similes populating Tzetzes' whole oeuvre since his earliest works. Thanks to a detailed examination of the components of his autobiographical subject, furthermore, I was able to disentangle the social implications and purports of Tzetzes' life narratives, shedding light on the ways he coped with the instability of his social self. The autobiographical act has therefore the function of defining and scaffolding this socially problematic subject.

Needless to say, isolating each single component of an autobiographical subject is somehow an artificial exercise. However, this does not mean that it is a preposterous one. As we have seen, it can provide information that would otherwise escape the reader's eye. Even more to the point, in our case we can confidently say that Tzetzes was very aware of the careful selection process behind his life-stories. Therefore, I would like to conclude with the words Tzetzes himself uses to describe his comments on Cato. They prove that the life-narrative presented in the *Chiliades* is ultimately just one – the one he chose for his purpose – out of many possible stories to be told about his authorial self:

> Τοιαῦτα τὰ τοῦ Κάτωνος, οἷα τανῦν εἰρήκειν.
> Εἰ θέλεις δὲ τοῦ Κάτωνος τὴν μίαν ἱστορίαν
> ἔχειν ὡς δύο, στρέψον μοι τοὺς χάρτας ὀπισθίως,
> καὶ ἐν τῷ πίνακι τῶν πρὶν ἱστοριῶν εὑρήσεις
> εἰς τὸν ἑβδομηκάζοντα κατακειμένην τόπον,
> αὐτοῦ τοῦδε τοῦ Κάτωνος καὶ πάλιν ἱστορίαν.

Πλὴν ἀλλ' ἐκεῖ ἑτέρως μέν, ἄλλως δ' ἐνθάδε πάλιν.
Καὶ ἄλλας εἰ θελήσεις γαρ ὡς δέκα ἱστορίας
εἴπω περὶ τοῦ Κάτωνος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ὁμοίως.
Ὁλόκληρον βιβλίον γαρ ἑκάστην ἱστορίαν
ὁ Τζέτζης οἶδεν ἀκριβῶς, οὐ στίχον εἴτε δύο.[59]

The facts about Cato are as I just said.
If you want to have two stories
at the price of one, please leaf through the book backwards,
and in the summary of the earlier stories you'll find again,
listed as seventieth,
a story about this very Cato.
And I recounted it there and here again in two different ways.
And if you want I could tell you ten stories
about Cato and so likewise about any other character.
Tzetzes accurately knows the book in its entirety, each story,
and not just one line or two.

[59] 10.347.664–74, p. 409 Leone.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Andronikos Kamateros, *Sacred Arsenal*. Ed. A. Bucossi, *Andronici Camateri sacrum armamentarium, pars prima*. Leiden 2014.

Eustathios of Thessaloniki, *Letters*. Ed. F. Kolovou, *Die Briefe des Eustathios von THessalonike: Einleitung, Regesten, Text, Indizes*. München–Leipzig 2006.

John Tzetzes, *Chiliades*. Ed. P. A. M. Leone, *Ioannis Tzetzae historiae*. Bari 1970.

John Tzetzes, *Letters*. Ed. P. A. M. Leone, *Epistulae*. Leipzig 1972.

John Tzetzes, *Trojan Songs*. Ed. P. A. M. Leone, *Ioannis Tzetzae carmina Iliaca*. Catania 1995.

Secondary sources

Agapitos, P. A. forthcoming. "'Middle-class' ideology of education and language, and the 'bookish' identity of John Tzetzes", in Stouraitis (ed.), *Ideologies and Identities in the Medieval Byzantine World*.

——— 2017. "John Tzetzes and the blemish examiners: A Byzantine teacher on schedography, everyday language and writerly disposition" *Medioevo Greco* 17, 1–57.

Barber, C. and D. T. Jenkins 2009. *Medieval Greek Commentaries on the Nicomachean Ethics*, Leiden.

Braccini, T. 2009–2010. "Erudita invenzione: riflessioni sulla Piccola grande Iliade di Giovanni Tzetze" *Incontri triestini di filologia classica* 9, 153–73.

Bruner, J. S. 1978. "The role of dialogue in language acquisition", in A. Sinclair, R. J. Jarvelle, and W. J. M. Levelt (eds), *The Child's Concept of Language.* New York, 241–56.

Bruss, E. 1976. *Autobiographical Acts: The Changing Situation of a Literary Genre*. Baltimore.

Cullhed, E. 2014. "The blind bard and 'I': Homeric biography and authorial personas in the twelfth century" *BMGS* 38, 49–67.

——— 2015. "Diving for pearls and Tzetzes' death" *BZ* 108/2, 53–63.

Gautier, P. 2011. "La curieuse ascendance de Jean Tzetzès" *REB* 28 (1970), 207–20.

Grünbart, M. 2016. "Paideia connects: the interaction between teachers and pupils in twelfth-century Byzantium", in Steckel, Gaul and Grünbart (eds) 2016, 17–32.

——— 1996. "Prosopographische Beiträge zum Briefcorpus des Ioannes Tzetzes" *JÖB* 46, 175–226.

Hinterberger, M. 1999. *Autobiographischen Traditionen in Byzanz*. Vienna.

Jeffreys, M. J. 1974. "The nature and origins of political verse" *DOP* 28, 141–95.

Kaldellis, A. 2009, "Classical scholarship in twelfth-century Byzantium", in Barber and Jenkins (eds) 2009, 1–44.

Kolias, T. G. 1980. "Zaba – Zabareion – Zabareiotes" *JÖB* 29, 27–35.

Lakoff, G. and M. Johnson 1980. *Metaphors We Live By*. Chicago.

Leone, P. M. A. 1969–1970. "Ioannis Tzetzae Iambi" *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici*, n.s. 6–7, 16–17, 128–56.

Lovato, V. F. 2016. 'Hellenizing Cato? A short survey of the concepts of Greekness, Romanity and barbarity in John Tzetzes' work and thought', in K. Stewart and J. M. Wakeley (eds) 2016. *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Byzantine World, c. 300–1500 A.D.* Oxford and New York 143–57.

Oberhelman, S. 2008. *Dreambooks in Byzantium: Six Oneirocritica in Translation, with Commentary and Introduction*. Burlington, VT.

Olney, J. 1972. *Metaphors of Self: The Meaning of Autobiography*, Princeton.

——— 1998. *Memory and Narrative: The Weave of Life-Writing*. Chicago.

Pizzone, A. 2016. "Audiences and emotions in Eustathios of Thessalonike's Commentaries on Homer" *DOP* 70, 225–44.

——— 2017 "The *Historiai* of John Tzetzes: a Byzantine 'Book of Memory'?" *BMGS* 41/2, 182–207.

——— forthcoming. "Autography and self-authorization in John Tzetzes" *GRBS*.

Riva, P. and J. Eck (eds) 2016. *Social Exclusion: Psychological Approaches to Understanding and Reducing Its Impact*. Berlin.

Smith, S. and J. Watson 2010. *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. Minneapolis.

Spelthahn, H. 1904. *Studien zu den Chiliaden des Johannes Tzetzes*. Munich.

Stavrakos, C. 2000. *Die Byzantinischen Bleisiegel mit Familiennamen aus der Sammlung des Numismatischen Museums Athen*. Mainz.

Steckel, S., N. Gaul and M. Grünbart (eds) 2016. *Networks of Learning. Perspectives on Scholars in Byzantine East and Latin West, c. 1000–1200*. Berlin, Münster, Vienna, Zürich and London.

Stouraitis, I. (ed.) forthcoming. *Ideologies and Identities in the Medieval Byzantine World*. Vienna.

Wendel, C. 1948. "Tzetzes", *RE* VII A 2, 1996–97.

Wesselmann, E. et al. 2016. "Social exclusion in everyday life", in Riva and Eck (eds) 2016, 3–23.

Xenophontos, S. 2014. "'A living portrait of Cato': self-fashioning and the classical past in John Tzetzes' *Chiliades*" *Estudios Bizantinos* 2 (2014) 187–204.

Young, M. J. and H. J. Burszstajn 2016. "Narrative, identity and the therapeutic encounter" *Ethics, Medicine and Public Health* 2.4, 523–34.

16

AFTERWORD

Margaret Mullett

The last word falls to me, perhaps unfairly. I was only very tangentially involved at the early stages of this endeavour, missing the Paris meetings (2016 and 2017) and the summer school in Istanbul (2016), and trying to keep up with the reading group from afar.[1] But I was present at both the workshop on storytelling (2015) and at its successor on verisimilitude (2016),[2] and I became very much involved from then on. It seems to me that what began as a strategy to solve an immediate pedagogical problem has turned into something much more durable and potentially influential.

The volume seems to me important for various reasons. First, it is a largely predoctoral achievement (nine out of the fourteen papers), involving, as the firstfruits of the network between Paris and Uppsala, students from Uppsala and EHESS, but including also students from Belgrade, Ghent, Katowice, Linköping, Mainz, and Munich, as well as three postdoctoral fellows and two senior members. But, impressive though it is, this is less unusual than it would have been a decade ago before the burgeoning of postgraduate conferences and even periodicals.[3] This volume however integrates, seamlessly, student work with the contributions of more experienced authors.

Secondly, it gives the lie to any sense that narratology is only appropriately applied to fictional texts. Though the leader of the network, Ingela Nilsson, is an expert on the novel, and other contributors have worked on romances and other fictional texts, only one chapter (Söderblom Saarela) deals with a romance text, and that is not a Byzantine text. Three chapters deal with historiography (Sirotenko, Kuttner-Homs, Labuk), two with hagiography (Van Pelt, Ciolfi), one with political biography (Messis), the familiar Byzantine narrative genres, but the volume casts its net even wider: two papers deal with hymnography (Eriksen, Borghetti), one with ekphrasis (Veikou), one with epistolography (Vukašinović), one with self-commentary (Pizzone), and one with wall-painting (Soria).

Thirdly, it may be Byzantinocentric, but is in no way barbarophobic. The chapters show Byzantium in its medieval context with its medieval languages and those of its

[1] http://www.grekiska.net/byzantine-narrative/ (accessed 3 March 2018).

[2] See the papers in Weller (ed.) 2007 (available at http://journals.lub.lu.se/index.php/sjbmgs).

[3] For example the volumes produced by the Oxford student conference, e.g. Steward & Wakely 2016 and the Birmingham online journal Diogenes (available at https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/bomgs/students/diogenes.aspx Accessed 3 March 2018).

neighbours. The one romance analysed in detail is French though its storyworld is an idealised Byzantium (Söderblom Saarela). The histories discussed include Syriac and Coptic examples and detailed comparison of a Greek and an Armenian treatment of the same event (Sirotenko, Weller). The Serbian texts in Old Slavonic are examined within their Hellenophile milieu but the relationship between them and development of indigenous genres is sensitively crafted (Vukašinović). It is only very recently that Byzantine literature has begun to be considered as one European medieval literature among others, and this collection of papers returns the compliment.

Fourthly, and most importantly, it is the first volume I know which explicitly applies a single body of theoretical material to Byzantine (and neighbouring) texts. The introduction explains that all contributors were encouraged to read classical and (ideally) post-classical narratology and "explore its potential for analysing premodern texts", but above all they were encouraged "to find their own variety of narratological analysis, classical or not".[4] Most became very comfortable with Genette's system: heterodiegetic narrators and focalizers are everywhere; prolepses, analepses, rhythm and frequency are identified and analysed (see, for example, Eriksen, Van Pelt, Söderblom Saarela, Kuttner-Homs). But the personal approach is very visible: there is enormous range from the modest and discreet chapters where it is hard to spot any theory to the confident, rigorous and explicit application of a single theory to a single text or group of texts (from, let us say, Sirotenko to Veikou). Other classical narratologists are used: Propp in the analysis of hymnography is a surprise, but a pleasant one (Borghetti). Bakhtin, long attractive, exceptionally so among theorists, to Byzantinists,[5] is also pleasingly joined by other theorists (though see Ciolfi and Labuk).

Some authors meld narratological methods with other theoretical approaches: with thick description in anthropology, subversion theory in historiography, classical terminology as developed in New Testament Studies (Veikou, Messis, Eriksen); some borrow eclectically and develop their own impressive methods of analysis, for example of epistolographic nodes (Vukašinović).

The postclassical narratology which appeals to them is cognitive, rhetorical, affective and spatial – and often heavily dependent on Byzantine context: unnatural narratives and storyworlds are postclassical narratological strategies which make sense to historians. There are impressive focused readings of Byzantine ekphrasis in terms of spatial theory (Veikou), of the eastern frontier as a storyworld which transcends language (Weller), of performance in terms of 'saints in disguise' (Van Pelt), of late Byz-

[4] See the introduction above, p. 5.

[5] See for example for adventure time, Beaton 2000; for adventure space and novelization, Mullett 2002 and 2006; for the grotesque, Constantinou 2010. On Bakhtin's place in the history of narratology see also the introduction above, p. 2.

antine narrative cycles in terms of Baroni's tension (Soria). I once said that when we found a specific theoretical reading of a specific text we would know that the study of Byzantine literature was catching up – belatedly – with its neighbours in classics and medieval literatures,[6] and we find those readings in plenty in this volume. Sometimes more can be seen through the process of editing than is currently visible in the polished text: the unnatural death of Andronikos Komnenos led one contributor to a brilliant reading of unnatural narrative, before it became clear to him that a detailed application of the concept of trickster tales allowed more sustained explication of the text of Choniates (Labuk).

All the authors were aware of the issue of diachronization and Eva von Contzen's argument for a medieval narratology,[7] though surprisingly only the paper on ekphrasis is truly diachronic. This volume takes us from the churches of Constantinople in the sixth century through the wider empire of the seventh century, female convents in the eighth and palace life in the tenth to the eastern frontier in the eleventh, and various intellectual and political milieus of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries as well as the walls of Serbian churches in the fourteenth. Von Contzen's ten theses find many resonances in this group of papers: the concentration on the middle ages, and on genres other than the novel, openness to other cultures and literatures, interdisciplinarity and the specific parameters of author/narrator, plot structure and motivation, character, perspective, time and space. In particular the determination that texts provide the basis for analysis and that theory is to be tested on the texts rather than the other way round found much agreement in this company. For a Byzantinist a medieval narratology is an attractive concept if it does not rule out the shared concerns of narratology as applied to classics. Whether a Byzantine narratology needs to be developed is an issue for the future; what the authors of this volume have achieved is that the case for using this body of narratological theory no longer needs to be made.

For my own part, returning to my problem texts of the twelfth century after reading narratological theory and also the use made of it by our authors will make light of hitherto intractable issues. The issue of fictionality in the *Life of Cyril Phileotes* has already been made easier through the work of Charis Messis, but my reading of possible worlds and fictional worlds theory will now be illuminated by the handling of similar issues, of an apparently factual text which diverges from other apparently factual texts, of multiple versions of self-narration, of the part played by time in fictional discourse.[8] When I look again at the *Diegesis Merike*, a proto-epistolary narrative, I shall see its epistolarity

[6] Mullett 1990, 274.
[7] Von Contzen 2014.
[8] *VCyrilPhil*; Messis 2014; Ronen 1994, Ryan 1991, Walsh 2007; in this volume Weller, Pizzone, Ciolfi.

afresh in the light of the *Lives* of Sava and Dometijan, and in the sense of narrative as an act of communication.[9] And when I return to the *Christos Paschon*, Byzantium's only tragedy, and look at its balance of *diēgēsis* and *mimēsis* and the issue of performability, I shall be guided not only by the example of classical narratological readings of ancient tragedies, for example of messenger speeches (my text has more such speeches than any ancient tragedy) but also by the treatment of the issue of drama in the *kontakia* of Romanos and of performance and focalisation in hagiography in this volume.[10]

Of course von Contzen's other point is well taken: we need to talk not only to ourselves, but to other students of medieval literatures, and not only to them but to the narratological theorists themselves, so that they can also appreciate the remarkable nature of Byzantine texts and, perhaps more importantly, what has been achieved through Byzantine scholarship like the research network "Texte et récit à Byzance".

[9] *Diegesis Merike*; Phelan 2005; in this volume Vukašinović, Weller.

[10] *Christos Paschon*; de Jong 2014, 197–223 and de Jong 1991; in this volume Eriksen, Van Pelt.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Nicholas Kataskepenos. *VCyril Phil.* Ed. É. Sargologos, F. S. C. *La vie de saint Cyrille le Philéote, moine byzantine (+1110).* SubsidHag 39, Brussels 1964.

Diegesis Merike. Ed. P. Meyer, *Die Haupturkunden für die Geschichte des Athosklöster*, 163–84. Leipzig 1894.

Christos Paschon. Ed. J. G. Brambs, *Christus Patiens. Tragoedia quae inscribi solet CHRISTOS PASCHON Gregorio Nazianzeno falso attributa* (Leipzig, 1885); Ed. A. Tuilier, *La passion du Christ: tragédie. Grégoire de Nazianze. Introd., texte critique., traduction, notes et index.* SC 149, Paris 1969.

Secondary sources

Beaton, R. 2000. "The world of fiction and the world 'out there': the case of the Byzantine novel", in D. C. Smythe (ed.), *Strangers to Themselves: The Byzantine Outsider.* SPBS 8, Aldershot, 179–88.

Constantinou, S. 2010. "Grotesque bodies in hagiographical yales: the monstrous and the uncanny in Byzantine collections of miracle stories" *DOP* 64 , 43–54.

Contzen, E. von. 2014. "Why we need a medieval narratology: a manifesto" *Diegesis: Interdisciplinary E-Journal for Narrative Research* 3.2, 1–21.

Jong, I. J. F. de 1991. *Narrative in Drama: The Art of the Euripidean Messenger-Speech*. Leiden.

——— 2014. *Narratology and Classics. A Practical Guide*. Oxford.

Messis, Ch. 2014. "Fiction and/or novelisation in Byzantine hagiography", in S. Efthymiadis

(ed.) 2014. *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography*, vol. 2*: Genres and Contexts*. Farnham, Surrey and Burlington, VA, 313–41.

Mullett, M 1990. "Dancing with deconstructionists in the gardens of the Muses: new literary history vs ?" *BMGS* 14, 258–75.

——— 2002. "In peril on the sea: travel genres and the unexpected", in R. Macrides (ed.) *Travel in the Byzantine World*. SPBS 10, Aldershot, 259–84.

——— 2006. "Novelisation in Byzantium: narrative after the revival of fiction", in Burke, J. et al. (eds) *Byzantine Narrative: Papers in Honour of Roger Scott*. Byz Aus 16, Melbourne, 1–28.

Phelan, J. 2005. "Rhetorical Narratology", in D. Herman et al. (eds), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London, 500–4.

Ronen, R. 1994. *Possible Worlds in Literary Theory*. Cambridge.

Ryan, M.-L. 1991. *Possible Worlds, Artificial Intelligence and Narrative Theory*. Bloomington IN.

Steward, K and J. M. Wakeley (eds) 2016. *Cross-Cultural Exchange in the Byzantine World, c.300–1500AD. Selected Papers from the XVII International Graduate Conference of the Oxford University Byzantine Society.* Byzantine and Neohellenic Studies Series 14, Oxford.

Walsh, R. 2007. *The Rhetoric of Fictionality. Narrative Theory and the Idea of Fiction*. Columbus, OH.

Weller, A. (ed.). 2017. *Narrative and Verisimilitude in Byzantium*, five papers with an introduction by A. Weller in *Scandinavian Journal of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 3, 9–124.

Index

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS UPSALIENSIS
Studia Byzantina Upsaliensia

EDITOR
Ingela Nilsson

ASSISTANT EDITOR
Eric Cullhed

1. *The Life of St Irene Abbess of Chrysobalanton. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes and Indices by* Jan Olof Rosenqvist. 1986.
2. *Gnomica Basileensia*. Edited by Jan Fredrik Kindstrand. 1991.
3. *Études sur Léontios de Néapolis.* Vincent Déroche. 1995.

4:1. *The Life of St Andrew the Fool. Edited by* Lennart Rydén. *I. Introduction, Testimonies and* Nachleben. *Indices*. 1995.

4:2. *The Life of St Andrew the Fool. Edited by* Lennart Rydén. *II. Text, Translation and Notes.* Appendices. 1995.

5. *The Hagiographic Dossier of St Eugenios of Trebizond in Codex Athous Dionysiou 154. A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Commentary and Indexes by* Jan Olof Rosenqvist. 1996.
6. *ΛΕΙΜΩΝ. Studies Presented to Lennart Rydén on His Sixty-Fifth Birthday. Edited by* Jan Olof Rosenqvist. 1996.
7. *Erotic Pathos, Rhetorical Pleasure: Narrative Technique and Mimesis in Eumathios Makrembolites' Hysmine & Hysminias.* Ingela Nilsson. 2001.
8. *The Life of St Philaretos the Merciful Written by his Grandson Niketas: A Critical Edition with Introduction, Translation, Notes, and Indices.* Lennart Rydén. 2002.
9. *Female Corporeal Performances: Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women.* Stavroula Constantinou. 2005.
10. *Saint Daniel of Sketis. A Group of Hagiographic Texts. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary.* Britt Dahlman. 2007.

11. *Containing Multitudes. Codex Upsaliensis Graecus 8 in Perspective.* Eva Nyström. 2009.

12. *ΔΩΡΟΝ ΡΟΔΟΠΟΙΚΙΛΟΝ. Studies in Honour of Jan Olof Rosenqvist. Edited by* Denis Searby, Ewa Balicka-Witakowska, and Johan Heldt. 2012.

13. *Byzantine Gardens and Beyond.* Helena Bodin and Ragnar Hedlund (eds). 2013.

14. *Vikings in the East. Essays on Contacts along the Road to Byzantium (800–1100).* Fedir Androshchuk . 2013.

15. *Wanted: Byzantium. The Desire for a Lost Empire. Edited by* Ingela Nilsson and Paul Stephenson. 2014.

16. *Byzantium and the Viking World. Edited by* Fedir Androshchuk, Jonathan Shepard, Monica White. 2016.

17. *Eustathios of Thessalonike: Commentary on Homer's Odyssey. Edited by* Eric Cullhed. *Volume 1: On Rhapsodies A–B.* 2016.

18. *Not Composed In a Chance Manner: The Epitaphios for Manuel I Komnenos by Eustathios of Thessalonike.* Emmanuel C. Bourbouhakis. 2017.

19. *Storytelling in Byzantium: Narratological approaches to Byzantine texts and images. Edited by* Charis Messis, Margaret Mullett, Ingela Nilsson. 2018.